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TECHNIQUE



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ADVANCED COMPOSITION

Michael Freeman's leading lines

AP GUIDE



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CARING FOR YOUR CAMERA

Top tips for camera maintenance

TESTED



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35mm/120 Reflecta
MidformatScan MF5000

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POWERSHOT G1 X

Canon's first APS-C compact

THE 11FPS NIKON

D4

**FIRST LOOK
HANDS-ON
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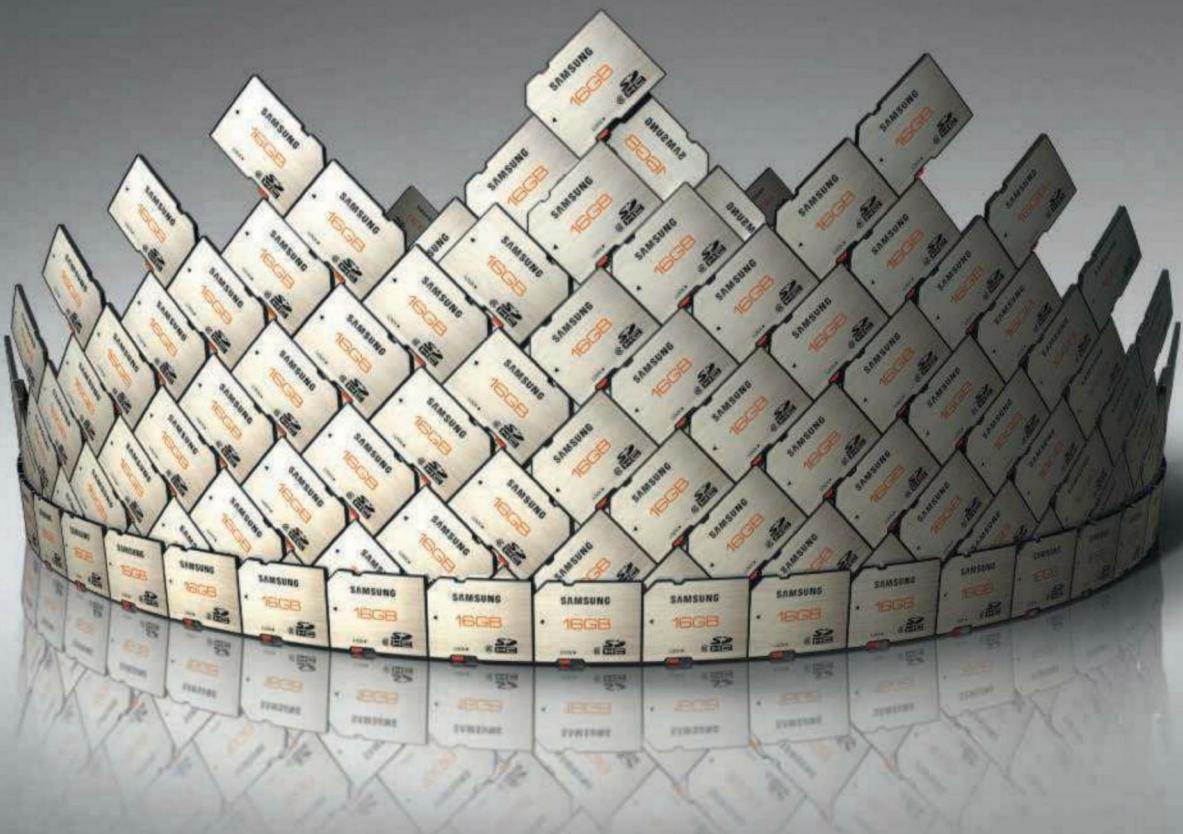
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Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

IT'S FAIR to say that Canon's G-series of flagship compact cameras has been one of the most popular and respected among serious photographers since the inception of the PowerShot G1 in 2000. They have been truly great cameras, with a single exception, but with the rise of the compact system camera (CSC), and more and more compacts using larger sensors, I couldn't help feeling the restriction placed on the G12 by its compact camera sensor. Canon's engineers have been masters of optical miniaturisation for some time, through moulded high-refractive index glasses, and it made me wonder why we weren't seeing a larger sensor in these can-do cameras.

Sensor size is a contentious issue. Manufacturers

one minute claim it's not important and the next, when they have one, they tell us that it is. I think, though, for most of us, it's obvious – larger sensors produce better images. With the pressure of the CSC market upon it, Canon had to react, and while the G1 X is not a system camera, in that its lens does not detach, it might be the first step on that road. Fuji took the lens off the X100 to make the X-Pro1, and Canon may take the lens off the G1 X to make its contribution to CSC. It could do a lot worse.



Damien Demolder
Editor

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COVER IMAGE: © MICHAEL FREEMAN

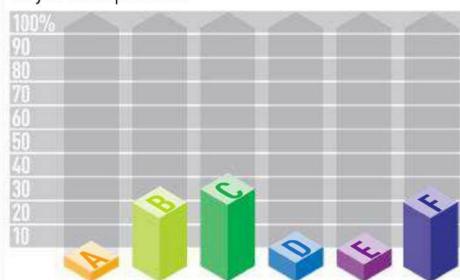
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THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 7 JANUARY WE ASKED...

Do you shoot portraits?



YOU ANSWERED...

A Yes, but only in the studio	2%
B Yes, by natural light	26%
C Yes, all sorts	33%
D I intend to start	7%
E I used to	6%
F I've never been interested	26%

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

Do you think it's time Canon introduced a CSC?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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Following an impressive series of entries, Simona Bonanno has won this year's Amateur Photographer of the Year competition. She talks to Oliver Atwell

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Michael Freeman looks at the age-old concept of leading lines – a feature that has more possibilities than you may think

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Although Apollo 8's mission was to orbit the Moon, its 'Earthrise from the Moon' image revealed a new perspective on the Earth, writes David Clark

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Our Price: £179.00



Not Available on this item

70-300mm f4 DG



Our Price: £131.00



Not Available on this item

70-300mm f4 APO



Our Price: £183.00



Not Available on this item

70-300mm DG OS



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or pay £11.54 per month

50-500mm f4.5 OS



Our Price: £1269.00



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Our Price: £759.00



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Our Price: £849.00



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APNews

News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 28/1/12

“The whole lens market has changed since the advent of the compact system camera”

Sigma debuts CSC lenses, page 6



Canon G-series flagship at CES • 4:3 aspect ratio sensor

CANON POWERSHOT G1 X ENDS ONLINE RUMOURS



CANON has confirmed the upcoming launch of the PowerShot G1 X, a 14.3-million-pixel model boasting the largest sensor yet for a Canon digital compact.

Touted as a 'master compact' to compete against DSLRs, and designed to deliver greater depth of field control, the G1 X is Canon's first compact camera to feature a 4:3 aspect, 14.3-million-pixel CMOS sensor, measuring 18.7x14mm.

It was showcased at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas.

In a statement, the firm claimed: 'Featuring the same pixel size and structure as the EOS 600D, and a surface area approximately 6.3 times larger than the sensor in the acclaimed PowerShot G12, it provides DSLR image quality in a body small enough to carry anywhere.'

Key features of the 534g camera include equivalent ISO sensitivity of 100-12,800 and a retractable six-blade aperture lens, made to professional 'EF' standards and designed to deliver the 35mm viewing-angle equivalent of a 28-112mm zoom.

The lens incorporates a '3-stop' neutral density filter, plus a '4-stop' optical image stabiliser and Hybrid IS technology intended to help combat camera shake when shooting close-ups.

'Photographers can shoot using the



ambient light in even the darkest of conditions, capturing natural shots with incredible detail and low noise – providing a powerful basis for low-light photography,' claimed Canon.

Features also include a full HD movie option, manual focusing and raw-file shooting.

Also on board is an HDR mode and 3in, 920,000-dot resolution, vari-angle LCD screen.

'The inclusion of the mode dial on top of the camera and the front dial helps provide more intuitive control of the

camera,' said a spokesman for Canon USA.

Canon claims that the G1 X can shoot six full-resolution images at 4.5 frames per second.

There is also a built-in, pop-up flash, as well as a hotshoe.

The G1 X is compatible with Canon's EOS DSLR accessories, such as EX Speedlite flash units.

The G1 X is due in UK stores from late February, priced £699. In the US it will retail for \$799.99.

A '40m waterproof' case will be available as an optional extra.

SNAP SHOTS

● Panasonic will release four Lumix G conversion lenses this spring. The conversion lenses are compatible with the Lumix G X Vario PZ 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Asph./Power OIS and Lumix G 14mm f/2.5 Asph. The DMW-GWC1 Wide Conversion Lens (around £120) extends the wide-end focal length from 14mm to 11mm; the DMW-GTC1 Tele Conversion Lens (around the same price) is designed to expand focal length from 42mm to 84mm; the DMW-GMC1 Macro Conversion Lens (around £90) aims to enable close-up shooting down to 0.14m; and the DMW-GFC1 Fish-eye Conversion Lens (around £140) produces a 120° fisheye effect.



To keep up to date with all the latest photography news on the AP website, scan this symbol with a QR code reader on your mobile phone, iPad or iPod.

WOODFORD PULLS OUT OF OLYMPUS COMEBACK

OUSTED Olympus CEO Michael Woodford, who blew the whistle on one of Japan's biggest corporate scandals, has abandoned his fight to return to the company.

Woodford confirmed to AP that he quit the fight amid the

stress the matter has caused to his family, despite being vindicated after alleging a multi-million-dollar financial wrongdoing, which Olympus admitted to last year.

Woodford now plans to sue Olympus for unfair dismissal, he

told journalists in Tokyo.

Although the Briton won support from foreign investors in his bid to return, he faced an uphill struggle to win over major, Japan-based, shareholders.

On 8 January, Olympus filed lawsuits against 19 current and

former directors in connection with the cover-up.

Olympus is seeking a total of 3.61 billion yen, plus damages for delayed settlement.

The lawsuits concern 'a breach of duty of care or other fiduciary duties' in relation to 'deferred posting of losses and related series of issues', and 'past dividend payments'.

Do you have a story?

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SNAP SHOTS

● A new Sigma lens, believed to be one of only two pre-production models in the world, went missing from the firm's stand at CES. Billed as the world's first 180mm f/2.8 macro lens to boast a 1:1 magnification ratio, the prized lens was unveiled at CES on 10 January, the opening day of the show. Sigma staff said they were mystified when the lens, one of three the firm showcased in Vegas, was nowhere to be found the next morning. The lens it replaces, the 180mm f/3.5 EX DG macro lens, costs more than £600 (for more on this lens see next week's *News*).

● Sony has shrugged off rumours it may seek a tie-up with scandal-hit camera maker Olympus, and Fujifilm refused to comment at CES. Sony and Fujifilm are among several firms reported to be interested in joining forces with Olympus, which is reeling from a massive accounting fraud. Speaking at CES, Elizabeth Boukis, senior public relations manager at Sony USA, told AP: 'We don't comment on rumours. Asked if Fujifilm was considering a strategic alliance with Olympus, Hiroyuki Saitou, operations manager of Fuji's imaging products planning division, also remained tight-lipped. Saitou was at CES to launch a new Fuji compact system camera, the X-Pro1 (see *News*, AP 21 January).

Sigma reveals micro four thirds and E-mount prime lenses

SIGMA DEBUTS ITS FIRST CSC LENSES



INDEPENDENT lens maker Sigma has announced its first lenses for mirrorless compact system cameras.

They are both prime lenses: a 30mm f/2.8 EX DN and 19mm f/2.8 EX DN will be available in versions for micro four thirds and Sony E-mount NEX cameras.

'These are the first of our [CSC] lenses,' said Sigma Imaging UK's general manager Graham Armitage in an interview with AP at CES in Las Vegas.

'The whole lens market has changed since the advent of CSC. They are a considerable influence and are affecting low-end compacts and entry-level DSLRs.'

However, it seems unlikely that Sigma will make lenses for the Nikon 1 system because its primary market is 'serious enthusiasts'. Asked if Sigma hopes Canon will enter the CSC market, Sigma's chief operating officer Kazuto Yamaki added: 'If they introduce a camera like Nikon's we have no interest.'

The 19mm f/2.8 EX DN lens features



three aspherical elements and should deliver the 35mm viewing-angle equivalent of a 38mm optic on micro four thirds cameras, and 28.5mm on the E-mount system.

Each lens uses a linear AF motor that is designed for accurate and quiet autofocus and to be ideal for shooting videos.

The linear motor, explained the firm, 'moves the lens elements directly without the need for gears or the drive of other mechanical parts'.

Meanwhile, the 30mm f/2.8 EX DN lens is designed to deliver the 35mm equivalent

of 60mm on micro four thirds cameras, and 45mm on an E-mount camera.

Both lenses include a seven-blade rounded diaphragm and Super Multi-layer lens coating to help reduce flare and ghosting.

The 30mm micro four thirds lens is set to go on sale as early as February. The others are due out in March, April and May.

Armitage said Sigma has no plans to launch a pancake lens, owing to the short back-focus issue on CSC cameras affecting quality at the edge of the image area.

Pricing has yet to be announced.

FUJI CLARIFIES X-PRO1 SPEC



IN A MORE detailed workshop following the announcement of its new X-Pro1 camera (see *News* and *Hands-on*, AP 21 January issue), Fujifilm has confirmed further details about the camera.

It transpires that the rear LCD monitor has a 1.23-million-dot resolution and not the 466,000 dots originally expected, with a 0.18% reflection compared to the 0.7% seen on most screens, according to Fuji.

The firm also supplied more detail about how the optical side of the viewfinder would work. An additional lens element is placed in the viewing path for use with the 35mm and 60mm lenses and can be manually applied by holding the viewfinder selector for a few seconds.

The standard magnification is 0.37x for the wide view and 0.6x for the standard view. The projected framing lines can adapt to a range of focal lengths and ratios, and are therefore expected to allow optical viewfinder use for the forthcoming zoom lens.



PANASONIC SHOWS 'CONCEPT' X LENSES



PANASONIC used the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas to reveal details of a pair of new X-series zoom lenses scheduled, it seems, to be launched in the second half of 2012.

The X Vario 12-35mm f/2.8 Asph Power OIS appeared slightly ahead on a timeline shown in a sealed cabinet on the Panasonic Lumix stand, perhaps timed for the photokina show in September. A second lens, the X Vario 35-100mm f/2.8 Asph Power OIS, may arrive slightly after that.

Both lenses are designed for the Lumix micro four thirds system, which is subject to a 2x magnification factor due to the smaller sensor used. The focal lengths shown will act as 24-70mm and 70-200mm lenses would on a full-frame camera.

The X denotation, as well as

the fast and constant maximum apertures and the metal appearance of the barrels, suggests these are premium optics set to match up with the new GX range of Lumix G bodies.

Mark Robinson, product manager for Lumix cameras in the UK, pointed out that these will be the 15th and 16th lenses in the range, and that even without them Panasonic has the largest lens collection of any compact system manufacturer.



SNAP SHOTS

● Fujifilm is set to launch an M-mount lens adapter for its X-Pro1 compact system camera. Hiroshi Kawahara, Fujifilm's operations manager for Product Planning, said the move will 'revive the old lenses from the film era'. This will allow the camera to be used with Leica M-mount as well as Fuji X-mount lenses. Kawahara was vague on the exact timing of the launch but, when pressed, said he expects it to go on sale in April, after the CP+ trade show in Japan next month.

● Sigma says the UK's Home Office has chosen its SD1 DSLR to help police forensic units solve crimes. Officers will use the on-board infrared feature to help detect traces of blood. Sigma UK refused to say how many it has sold to the Government on grounds of confidentiality.

● Tripod maker Manfrotto has launched a range of LED lights designed for photo studios and other areas requiring illumination, indoors or outdoors. There are six different models in the line-up designed for professionals and enthusiasts, priced from £39.95. Visit www.manfrotto.com.



Do you have a story?

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D4 to take on Canon EOS-1D X

NIKON D4 SET FOR OLYMPICS SHOWDOWN

NIKON is on track to beat Canon in the race to release rival flagship DSLRs in time for this summer's London 2012 Olympics.

Nikon will next month launch the D4, a new 16.2-million-pixel full-frame professional DSLR that replaces the D3S and is designed to autofocus even in 'moonlight' conditions.

Nikon plans to debut the D4 in February, ahead of Canon's 18.1-million-pixel, full-frame EOS-1D X, which is not due to go on sale until March.

Claimed to set a new benchmark in low-light performance, the Nikon D4 boasts a shooting rate of up to 11 frames per second.

Equivalent ISO sensitivity can be extended to a maximum of ISO 204,800 and, following demands from photographers, down to ISO 50.

'This camera can truly see in the dark,' said James Banfield, Nikon UK's group support and training manager. 'This is as big a leap forward for professional photography as the D3. This is a camera created by photographers.'

The D4 is expected to go on sale in the UK on 16 February, priced £4,799.99 body only.

Nikon has also announced a new AF-S Nikkor 85mm f/1.8 G portrait lens, which is expected out in late March, priced £469.99.

The FX-format D4 borrows its Expeed 3 image processor from Nikon's recently launched Nikon 1 CSC models.

'High-speed, 16-bit processing follows the 14-bit A/D conversion to deliver submission-ready JPEGs straight out of the camera,' claims Nikon.

NEW SENSOR

The 91,000-pixel RGB metering sensor, designed to 'meticulously analyse each scene for outstanding accuracy', plus improved 3D tracking, is claimed to be particularly useful for focusing on smaller subjects.

Nikon says it has 're-engineered' the Multi-Cam3500FX AF sensor for faster subject detection. The AF is quicker than that on board the D3S and can operate in 'moonlight conditions' – akin to '-2EV', according to Banfield.

Like the D3, it offers 51 AF points, but the D4 promises a 'big jump for sports photographers' by incorporating 15 AF sensors including one cross-type sensor, with f/8 sensitivity.

This is said to provide a new level of AF detection when using, for example, a Nikon 2x teleconverter and 600mm f/4 lens.

Banfield explained that this means sports photographers won't need to carry as many lenses with them when travelling to the London 2012 Olympics – a key target market for the D4.

Using a redesigned AF control switch, photographers should be able to quickly switch AF modes without taking their eye away from the viewfinder. New AF control switches aim to allow fast repositioning of the AF point. And the focus point automatically repositions itself when the camera is switched to vertical orientation.

The D4 will be compatible with the new high-speed, high-capacity XQD memory card format, as well as traditional CompactFlash cards.

The camera also features a new, longer-life (400,000 release cycle) shutter, a top shutter speed of 1/8000sec and a '60g lighter' magnesium-alloy body.

Handling benefits over the D3 include illumination of the control buttons to help photographers in low-light conditions.

In a bid to improve the photographer's workflow, time-lapse movies can be played back in-camera, dispensing with the need for a computer.

The newcomer will be compatible with a new optional £649 WT-5 wireless transmitter that will allow the camera to be controlled remotely from an Apple iPad tablet or iPhone. Video can also be started and stopped in this way.

Other tweaks include a 'dual-axis virtual horizon' that can be viewed on the 3.2in LCD (921,000-dot resolution) monitor or on the viewfinder. The monitor itself boasts a 'vastly improved' colour range, in addition to autobrightness control.

FOCUS ON VIDEO

To cater for the growing market for DSLR-using videographers, the D4 includes a full HD (1920x1080-pixel) movie mode and, for the first time in a DSLR, a video sound 'out' port for use with headphones.

There is also a slow-motion movie option, delivering 60/50 frames per second.

Video length has been expanded to a 29min 59sec record time and equivalent ISO sensitivity of 200-204,800 also applies to video recording.



TECHNICAL COMMENT

Mat Gallagher Deputy editor



The Nikon D4 answers a very specific need – that of the professional sports photographer. However, with its specification it is bound to appeal to a much wider audience. For those photographers who demand high-speed shooting in low light, such as fast-moving sports or wildlife, the D4 competes with just one other camera: the Canon EOS-1D X.

The D4's sensor has a lower resolution, but only by fewer than 2 million pixels, and both sensors are full-frame CMOS units. The EOS-1D X's burst rate is also faster, particularly in its 14fps high-speed mode, but for continuous AF use it gains only 1fps.

To the D4's advantage, it will be cheaper by nearly £400 and be available nearly a month earlier. The extra sensitivity of 15 AF sensors means that users of f/4 lenses with 2x teleconverters will still have autofocus control. Based on estimations of the Canon EOS-1D X, the D4 will also weigh less, but the real test will come in their performance and image quality.

Nikon claims that the Expeed 3 processor delivers 'cleaner movie files even using very high ISO settings'.

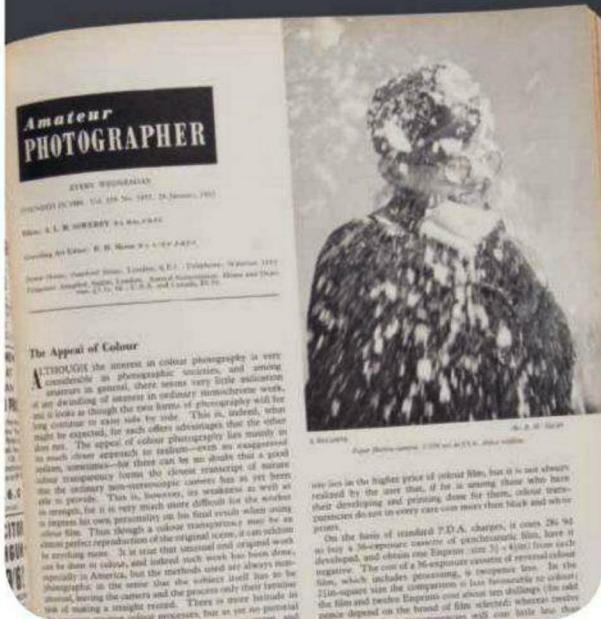
The camera's claimed ability to offer a 'live view feed without compression' (at 1080x720 pixels, via the HDMI port) is designed to be suitable for broadcast purposes.

Nikon claims that, despite the camera's new 'lower-capacity battery', it will outperform the D3S in continuous mode to deliver around 5,500 frames. Higher-capacity batteries are now banned under Japanese law.

AP THIS WEEK IN...

1955

Colour photography may have been all the rage, but there was little sign that interest in black & white was dwindling this week in 1955. AP put the continued popularity of monochrome down to the fact that while 'a colour transparency may be an almost perfect reproduction of the original scene, it can seldom be anything more'. Black & white allowed the photographer to stamp their 'personality' on the final print more easily. 'There is more latitude in the negative-positive colour processes, but as yet no pictorial technique extending beyond the choice, arrangement and lighting of the subject has been developed.'



CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

LONDON PHOTOGRAPHIC MEETUP GROUP

The group is due to host a talk by photographer Damien Lovegrove on 4 February. Tickets are expected to cost around £20. For details visit www.meetup.com/londonphotos.

VAN CAM CAMERA CLUB

The South Wales-based Van Cam Camera Club has built up a membership of more than 80 members since it was set up just over a year ago, reports Wales Online. The club, which is based in Caerphilly, meets on Thursday evenings (7pm-9pm) at the Van Community Centre, Porset park, Caerphilly CF83 2YD.

SNAP SHOTS

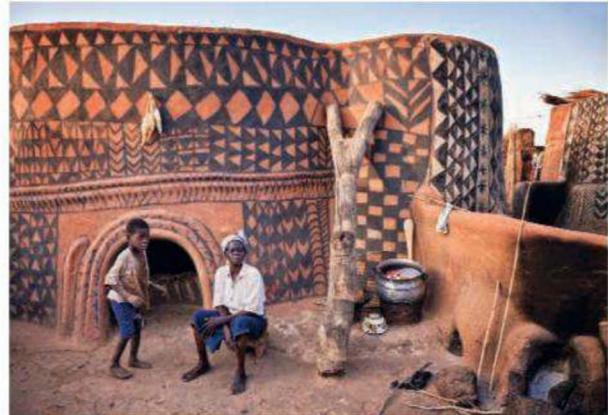
Kenro has launched the Nissin MF18 Macro ring flash, which is designed for portrait work in the studio or on location. The AA-battery-powered MF18 has a GN of 16m @ ISO 100 and includes a wireless TTL function designed to allow the use of slave flash units. The device is designed to provide an even spread of light, 'end overexposed images' and remove 'ugly shadows'. The MF18 will fit lenses from 49-82mm with mount adapters. Sizes 52mm, 58mm, 62mm, 67mm, 72mm and 77mm are included while 49mm, 55mm and 82mm are optional extras. Available soon in Canon and Nikon fits, the Nissin MF18 Macro will cost £359.99. Call 01793 615 836 or visit www.kenro.co.uk.

AP readers can qualify for an extra 10% off Portrait Professional 10 retouching software if they quote the code 'AP2411' when buying online. The software currently costs £29.95 for the standard edition, which is less than half its normal price, say makers. It boasts face, skin and hair retouching options. For a free trial, visit www.portraitprofessional.com.



Do you have a story?

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Travel Photographer of the Year 2011

UK-BORN PHOTOGRAPHER CLAIMS TRAVEL TITLE

A FORMER professor of the University of California has triumphed in the 2011 Travel Photographer of the Year (TPOTY) competition.

Louis Montrose, who was born in London and now lives in the US, won the annual contest with two 'striking and very different portfolios'.

One documents life in Burkina Faso in West Africa (see above) and the other a festival in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Louis won a £1,000 cash bursary and prizes that included

Adobe image-editing software. UK winners include Philip Lee Harvey, who won honours in the Best Single Image in a Portfolio category, and Stuart Dunn, who scooped top spot in the One Shot, Wild Moments section.

The Young Travel Photographer of the Year was 17-year-old Arne Hansen from Germany.

The best images from TPOTY 2011 are due to go on show at the Royal Geographical Society in London from 21 June-19 August.

TRUE STORY BEHIND STAMP SHOOT

ARMED with a bin bag, a photographer became a cleaner for one of the most important commissions of his life – to shoot 10 Downing Street for a first-class stamp.

Landscape photographer and AP Photo insight contributor David Noton was at the PM's abode to shoot a picture of the famous address for a stamp released by Royal Mail.

Speaking about the commission, David told AP: 'I spent a very enjoyable afternoon in Downing Street, waiting for the window and doorway lights to come on.'

However, after a leisurely tour of Number 10 David came back down to earth when he realised a massive clean-up was needed to ensure leaves littering the doorway didn't ruin the photos.

David said he and stamp designer Robert Maude 'were down on our knees on the doorstep with a bin

bag picking up leaves'.

David captured the picture (below), which went on sale last year as a first-class stamp, using a Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III and 24mm lens.

Asked if there were any other hurdles to overcome for the stamp series, launched last year, he told us: 'All the pictures had to be very simple because they had to work as small reproductions.'

The stamps also feature images by landscape ace Charlie Waite.

Other subjects include the Angel of the North, Blackpool Tower and Harlech Castle.



© DAVID NOTON

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AP hands-on Nikon D4

This professional sports camera carries a new full-frame sensor, has revised ergonomics and an XQD card slot. **Mat Gallagher** takes a first look at the Olympic contender hoping to lead in 2012

PROFESSIONAL DSLRs often appear to be more like finely tuned machines than cameras, much like a highly trained athlete compared to a casual gym-goer. The photographers who use these machines are under pressure to capture the defining moment of the event and send it back to the picture desk within minutes. Such time-sensitive demands mean the camera needs to be flawless in its performance, as missing the shot or getting it wrong isn't an option. These pro DSLRs are workhorses and contain the most advanced camera technology to ensure they never miss a beat. Being an Olympic year, the professional camera brands are keen to ensure their latest cameras are ready for the hundreds of photographers who will

be documenting the Olympic Games in London. The D4 is Nikon's offering.

In October last year Canon announced the EOS-1D X as its replacement for the professional EOS-1D series, but with a lead time that meant the new cameras wouldn't be available until March – just in time for the Olympics. Nikon's latest offering will go head-to-head with the new Canon, although it will be available earlier and at a lower price.

The new D4 officially replaces the D3S. The studio-based D3X remains, so we should see a D4X in the near future.

Like the previous D3S, the D4 has a full-frame, 35mm sensor. Measuring 36x23.9mm, the 16.2-million-pixel, FX CMOS unit is brand new, with fast

AT A GLANCE

- 16.2-million-pixel, FX-format (full-frame) CMOS sensor
- Expeed 3 image processor
- Nikon F mount
- ISO 100-12,800 (ISO 50-204,800 expanded)
- 51-point Multi-CAM3500FX AF system
- 3.2in, 922,000-dot LCD monitor
- Dual-storage slots for CF and the new XQD cards



Above: The dual card slots for CompactFlash and the new high-speed and high-capacity XQD memory

read outputs for quicker data transfer – something that seems to have been a priority at every stage of this camera's development. Accompanying it is the new Expeed 3 processor that debuted on the Nikon 1 compact system cameras (CSCs). With this physically larger sensor, the processor enables up to 11fps rather than the 60fps on the CSCs, but this is more than sufficient for even the fastest sports. It is the length of the burst that matters and here it is certainly no slacker. Using the new XQD cards, Nikon claims that up to 98 raw files can be shot in one burst, which is equivalent to almost 9secs continuous shooting.

Previous Nikon models have performed very well in low light, and the D4 promises to be even better. The ISO range has been extended to offer a top setting of ISO 12,800 and a Hi 4 equivalent of ISO 204,800. Slow shooting has also been considered with a Lo 1 equivalent of ISO 50. It is a shame the low settings don't extend to ISO 3 or similar, although this would be more useful on a camera aimed at landscape photographers. Not only can the camera shoot in extreme low light, but Nikon claims it can also continue to autofocus in these conditions.

The newly adapted MultiCAM 3500fx AF system uses 51 points, including 15 cross-type, and an improved focus-tracking system. This is claimed to work in -2EV conditions, or the equivalent of moonlight.

Changing AF mode is now an easier process, requiring only a press of the AF switch, as used on the D7000. An indicator of the chosen mode is shown in the viewfinder by the pattern of AF points to allow you to change modes without moving it away from your eye.

In contrast to Canon's latest AF system, 15 of the focus points have sensitivity at up to f/8, which means that even when using f/4 lenses with a 2x teleconverter, the AF system will still function effectively. For travelling photographers this means that more compact f/4 units can be carried, rather than the hefty f/2.8 lenses.

The metering system is the new 3D Color Matrix Metering III. It uses 91,000 pixels and offers more advanced scene recognition, and face detection that is



claimed can detect even the 'smallest' faces in a scene. The new Kevlar/carbon-fibre shutter is tested up to 400,000 cycles with shutter speeds from 30-1/8000sec and up to 1/250sec flash sync.

Although the D4 doesn't look hugely different from its predecessor, there are some significant changes to the operation and handling. At 1,340, the magnesium-alloy body of the D4 is now lighter than that of the D3. As well as the AF button already mentioned, two jog pads now feature, primarily for focus selection and menu navigation while holding the camera horizontally or vertically. In fact, the arrangement of the key buttons is perfectly mirrored for a vertical and horizontal grip, and the chosen AF point will move accordingly as you rotate the camera. To aid working in the dark, the D4 also features illuminated buttons both on the back of the camera and on the top plate, which can be turned off in the menu if not required. More subtly, the shutter button now sits at a great 35° angle, rather than 28°, for a more comfortable press, and is accompanied by a dedicated movie-record button.

The virtual horizon indicator is available through the viewfinder as well as on the rear screen, making use of the AF points and the exposure compensation slider for the axis. With the projection possibilities available, however, it would have been nice to have the full *Top Gun*-styled level as seen on the LCD overlaid on the viewfinder.

The rear screen is a large 3.2in (8cm), 921,000-dot LCD, but more importantly the colour gamut has been extended to almost match sRGB colour space and that of most monitors. The auto adjustments can control the brightness, saturation, contrast and gamma to ensure the preview remains accurate, while a new gel resin between the screen and glass helps eliminate reflections and fogging.

The dual memory slots take

Above: The top plate features a new direct video-record button next to the shutter release

Right: The layout of the control dial, AF button and thumb-pad controller are identical in both vertical and horizontal holding positions

Below: Deputy editor Mat Gallagher gets hands-on with the Nikon D4 camera at the London launch



'Not only can the D4 shoot in extremely low light, but Nikon claims it can also continue to autofocus in these conditions'

CompactFlash and the brand-new XQD format. XQD promises groundbreaking transfer speeds and capacities to outclass even the very latest CompactFlash from the outset.

Other functions of interest include time-lapse movie creation, HDR imaging, in-camera editing and a choice of three crop modes: FX (1x), DX (1.5x) and 1080 HD (2.7x), allowing you more options from your lenses in video or still shooting.

Although the D4 is aimed primarily at the stills photographer, Nikon has recognised the need of professionals for video and has upped its game accordingly. The camera features full HD (1080p)

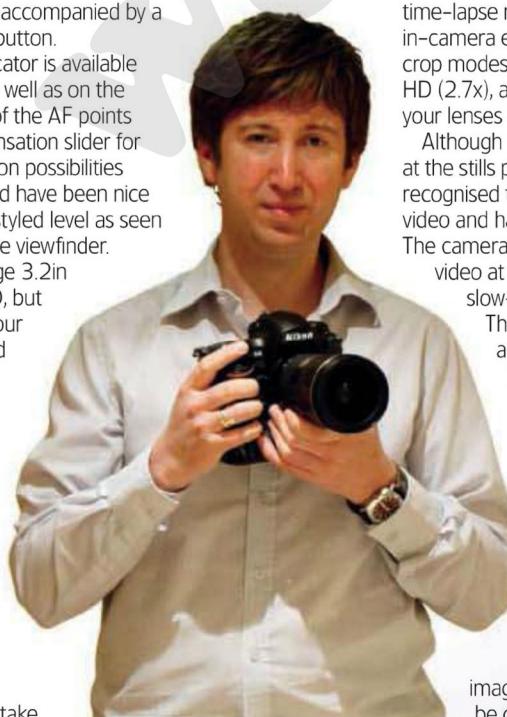
video at 30fps, 25fps or 24fps and slow-motion 60fps at 720p.

The microphone input has 29 adjustments for fine-tuning and it is the first DSLR video camera to feature a 'headphone out' for monitoring sound. The full ISO range is available for video use with a clip time of up to 29.59mins. For broadcast, uncompressed 1080i video can be outputted live from the HDMI port, while still recording compressed to a card. Still images (at 2 million pixels) can also be captured during filming.

A new WT-5 wireless transmitter unit is available separately. It is smaller than the previous WT-4 and now takes its power from the camera rather than requiring a separate battery. Wireless remains a separate add-on, partly due to the added signal strength. The magnesium-alloy body of the D4 would restrict the signal compared to the polycarbonate housing of the adapter. Using this device it is possible to access the camera's controls via a standard web browser on a laptop, tablet or smart phone. This allows control of the shutter, shooting mode, focus and other functions remotely, without additional applications or software.

The D4 features a new battery, with lower power than that used in the D3 and D3S due to new Japanese restrictions on lithium-ion units. With standard CIPA testing, this has resulted in a decline in the battery's lifespan, from 4,200 to 2,600 shots. However, when used in burst mode Nikon claims a much greater 5,500 shots per charge.

Although the D4 is not aimed at the amateur audience, the specification will undoubtedly be of interest – especially as the advanced features found on professional cameras often trickle down to consumer DSLR models. **AP**



The Nikon D4 goes on sale on 16 February, priced £4,799.99 body only

APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Oliver Atwell

© MICHAEL RICHARDS



© CHRISTIAN MOULLEC



© PHILIP DALTON



BOOK

Earthflight

By John Downer
BBC Books, £30, hardback,
240 pages, ISBN 978-1-84-607973-3



RELEASED to coincide with the BBC series of the same name, John Downer's book is a wonderful exploration of the world through a bird's-eye view – literally. Using state-of-the-art technology, Downer and the BBC film crew were able to capture the incredible airborne journeys of our feathered friends. The book collects 200 images from the series and spans the world in an attempt to view the Earth from this incredible perspective. *Earthflight* follows the migratory routes of a host of species as they travel the world, meaning that many of the images on display are genuinely breathtaking. Yet the book isn't just dependent on its images, as there is also a fascinating look at how the series came together that shows the absolute dedication of the crew behind the awe-inspiring images.

<http://vervephoto.wordpress.com>



WHAT is the definition of 'verve'? Helpfully, Verve Photo explains that it's 'endurance, fire, force, gumption, gusto, intensity, moxie, passion, spunk, stamina, strength, toughness, vigour'. It's a bold word that acts as a striking statement of intent for this excellent site.

Verve Photo is the brainchild of photographer and photo editor Geoffrey Hiller. The site features photographs and interviews with the photographers who Hiller deems

to be the most challenging and significant contributors to the contemporary documentary scene. The principal aim is to remind viewers of the enduring power of the still image to witness, inform and entertain. Each entry features a single powerful image, an explanation of its context and a helpful biography of the photographer. The obvious virtue of any site like this is not only to introduce us to a new photographer, but also to raise awareness of issues that fall under the radar of mainstream news.





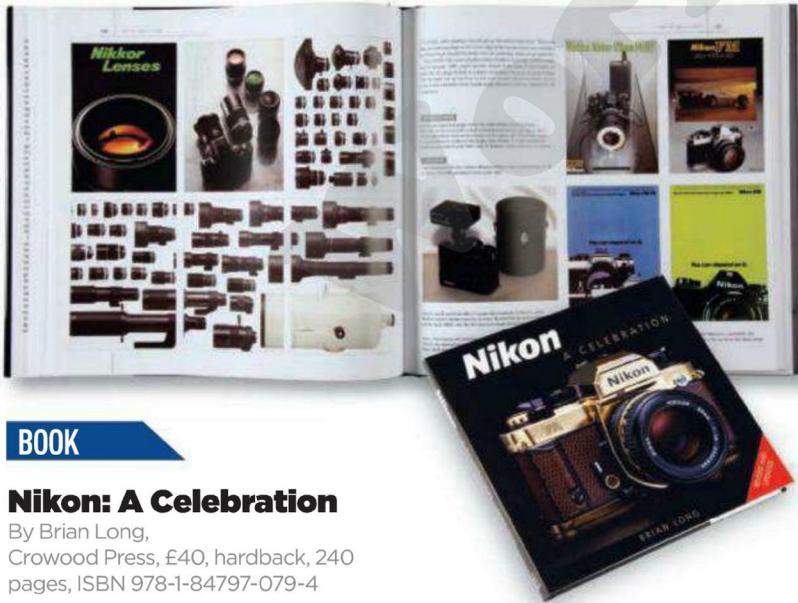
EXHIBITION

Over the Parched Field

By Akiko Takizawa. Until 1 March. Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Daiwa Foundation Japan House, 13/14 Cornwall Terrace (Outer Circle), London NW1 4QP. Tel: 0207 486 4348. Web: www.dajf.org.uk. Open Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm. Admission free

IN THE volcanic mountain area of Osorezan in Aomori live a traditional and tight-knit society, one that struggles every day against the severe natural environment that they call their home. It's not exactly the kind of place one would expect to find visitors, yet this region is frequently visited by the relatives of the recently deceased. Once there, they attempt to contact their loved ones through a medium. It's an idea that speaks strongly

of the blurring between life and death in Japanese culture and it's something Takizawa has explored in her strange monochrome images. Takizawa takes her own feelings of detachment from the world and uses them to approach the subject in a very individual way. The images are as ghostly as their subject matter, with mist and grain often obscuring what is going on in the frame, but this all adds to the overall power of the work.



BOOK

Nikon: A Celebration

By Brian Long, Crowood Press, £40, hardback, 240 pages, ISBN 978-1-84797-079-4

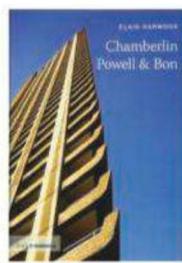


THIS book is a real treat for Nikon enthusiasts. The newly revised and updated edition is a fascinating history of one of the world's leading camera manufacturers and a pleasure to read. Any suspicions that the book is nothing more than a promotional catalogue soon abate as you navigate your way through the copy, dense as it is with meticulous detail and

research. The history of the firm makes for an excellent story and the detail about camera will be of interest to more than just collectors. Yet *Nikon: A Celebration* is more than just text because the images are also a real pleasure. Just the cameras themselves are enough to enjoy, but to also see the promotional advertisements and vintage posters adds a real level of fascination. This is a great book.

CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



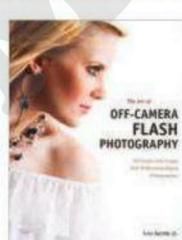
● **CHAMBERLIN, POWELL & BON** by Elain Harwood, £20

The fine little book attempts to rectify the unfair virtual anonymity of Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, three architects who designed London's landmark Barbican venue. The history of all three men is fascinating and the images do true justice to their work. Worth a look. ● **BAFFIN**



ISLAND: THE ASCENT OF MOUNT ASGARD by Alastair Lee, £25

Mount Asgard in Canada's Auyuittuq National Park is a truly breathtaking landmark and Alastair has done the location real justice with this excellent book. The images are stunning and the brief yet informative text is a pleasure to read. ● **THE ART OF OFF-CAMERA FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** by Lou Jacobs



Jr, £24.99 There are plenty of books about off-camera flash on the market, so what makes this book stand out above the others? Well, as an introduction to the method it's a good place to start, but for anyone looking for a more advanced and accessible volume it may be better to look elsewhere.



● **FINAL THOUGHTS: ETERNAL BEAUTY IN STONE** by John Thomas Grant, £27.50 Death. You can't escape it, but don't let that get you down. This sensitive and strangely moving book takes a look at the odd beauty of death, particularly with regards to our final resting places. John Thomas Grant's journey is an interesting one and his images bring a melancholic beauty out of what could easily have been a grim subject.

Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card*



THANKS TO JESSOPS...

At the end of last year my son got married in Torquay, Devon. I had my favourite camera, a Canon EOS 5D Mark II, with me and I was ready to shoot hundreds of wonderful photographs of my son's special day.

On the morning of the wedding I awoke at around 6am and looked out of my hotel window to see a fantastic view of the bay with the moonlight shining on the water. I grabbed my camera, switched it on – the camera was dead.

With just a few hours to go to the wedding and after various attempts to revive the camera, I decided to try one last thing – run like mad to the town and find a camera shop that was open. Jessops was the first retailer I found, so I went in and headed for the nearest sales assistant. After talking to a very helpful and knowledgeable young man called Dave Brine, who examined the camera, we both came to the conclusion that nothing could be done.

Dave then asked me what I needed the camera for, so I told him it was for my son's wedding in about two hours. He offered to lend me his Canon EOS 7D – which was at home, 30-minutes' drive away. He wouldn't get there and back in time, so he called his partner and asked her to jump in her car and bring it to the shop.

The wedding went perfectly and thanks to Dave I was able to use my lenses and take a few hundred shots. I then returned the camera.

As this service was way beyond what most people and companies would offer, I would like AP readers to know that there are some very special people out there who love their photography. Thanks, Dave – you saved my day.

Martin Hayes, Berkshire

What a nice man. If there were ever an argument for human cloning, Dave is it – Damien Demolder, Editor

NO AUTOMATIC RIGHT?

While I was saddened to read about Rachel Cheer's experiences while taking photographs in a church (AP 10 December 2011), people have to remember that a

church is a private space and that we don't have an automatic right to take photographs inside any private space.

In my church, no photographs are permitted during religious services, which

What The Duck



<http://www.whatttheduck.net/>

you can imagine, leads to endless rows with professional wedding photographers. However, the parishioners democratically voted to ban photography and, unless they change their minds, that's that.

I am an active member of my church. I take photographs that are used in the parish magazine, on the website, on calendars and for publicity material, but despite this, I always make a point of asking permission before I even take my camera out of the camera bag. I have learned that while photographers are pretty safe in most naves, photographers should approach altars, lecterns and fonts with extreme care. Do resist the temptation to rearrange objects and decorations. Their present arrangement might not suit your planned composition, but their positioning is probably highly symbolic.

If you want freedom to use your camera in a private space like a church, why not ask first or visit at times like festivals (when photography is encouraged). Alternatively, visit a church in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust (www.visitchurches.org.uk) or English Heritage (www.english-heritage.org.uk), or pay for a photo pass to your local cathedral.

David Price, Wolverhampton

I'm not sure what Rachel assumed, but in fact there is an automatic right to take pictures in a private place unless you are expressly made aware that the owner does not want you to.

The issue here is the hostile reception she got, especially from a person who professionally encourages peace, harmony and good will. Religious places are designed, in spectacular fashion, to be impressive, as they are tributes to the glory of the gods they serve. That people want to take pictures is tribute to that and is a positive, not a negative, point.

The next time your parishioners discuss the ban on photography during weddings, ask them to consider how many photo albums exist that do not contain an aid to the memory of the most solemn moment of the wedding. Their rule excludes God from the story of the day for ever more. Wedding photography isn't just about idiots running up and down the aisle with a flashgun – it's about keeping the most important parts of the day fresh in the mind, and it can be done discreetly –

Damien Demolder, Editor

LONG-TERM STORAGE

I was surprised that your article *Future proofing*, AP 7 January, mentioned only the DVD-R format and not DVD+R. Before I switched to a digital camera 18 months ago, I undertook a search on the internet to find which back-up system I should use. I couldn't find estimates of the lifetime of DVD brands and formats, but I did find information that seemed sound, claiming that DVD+R is superior to DVD-R for various reasons, including thorough error protection. Since then I've been using DVD+R.

I would welcome an authoritative verdict

STILL STILT FISHING

In AP 17 December 2011, David Noton states in his *Photo insight* column that he was told there have been no stilt fishermen in the part of Sri Lanka he visited since the tsunami of 2004. The photograph (right) was taken in May 2010 with my Olympus E-420 and 300mm lens in Sri Lanka. While there was a man on the beach who appeared to be with the fishermen, he did not ask for money or approach us so I can only assume that the men were actually fishing and not posing for the tourists.

Martyn Tuckwell, Northumberland



on whether DVD-R or DVD+R is likely to be more reliable for long-term storage in a future edition of AP.

I save my images onto two sets of DVDs, so I can always keep one away from our house in case of fire. I also check my DVDs periodically to ensure they can still be read.

Chris Newman, Hertfordshire

As with many new forms of technology, there became two main standards for DVD, with various manufacturers backing each. The differences between DVD-R and DVD+R come in how they are written, making the two formats incompatible. Although some have claimed the + format to be superior due to the error-checking processes it uses, there is actually little between them. Most modern DVD writers and readers are capable of using both formats, so what is worth looking at is the material used – gold discs will not corrode like silver or silver alloy versions. However, all use a dye-based layer for the data that will degrade naturally over time. Manufacturers claim life expectancies of 30–100 years, but as this depends on storage conditions it is always best to err on the side of caution – Mat Gallagher, deputy editor

THANKS FOR THE IDEA

I have just read Heather Angel's *Photo insight* article in AP 14 January about using focus stacking for images of plants. I have seen macro shots of this technique before, but have never thought of trying it.

The picture of a love-in-the-mist flower taken by Heather is absolutely stunning. I have now ordered a focusing rail and downloaded the software for the stacking process so I can try it out for myself.

Colin Sargent, via email

ANGELS AND DEMONS

Regarding the letter from Nigel Cox in Ask AP 7 January about taking photographs at Monkey World, I think there is a further issue here. The statements that visitors may only take photographs 'as a reminder of your visit to the park... for personal use only', and 'You may not use photographs or videos

taken of our primates, staff or park, for any commercial purposes' need clarification. Does this mean that you may not enter any photos that were taken at Monkey World in a competition, even one without a prize? If you wanted to send such a photograph to AP for a critique, would that be permitted? Would you be allowed to show photos taken there to a neighbour or a friend without being in breach of Monkey World's rules?

There is a danger that such terms and conditions could be self-defeating. Surely any activity that helped publicise Monkey World would be good for the company in the form of free publicity? Surely it would make more sense if it said simply, 'You mustn't sell any images taken on the premises or use them for commercial profit.'

It seems to me that far too many organisations now see demons everywhere and fail to recognise the angels!

Keith Longmore, Norfolk

THE IDEAL VIEWFINDER?

I couldn't believe my eyes when I read about Samsung's plans at the end of last year to produce a flexible electronic screen that is transparent. Apparently, it will appear in mobile phones in 2012, although why the company feels that we need flexible screens is beyond me.

However, such material must be capable of producing the perfect viewfinder for cameras, as it is optically transparent, yet able to display information or images when needed. Bring it on!

And if Damien Demolder is discussing sensors with manufacturers (*Letters*, AP 10 December 2011), why doesn't somebody produce a sensor that is slightly curved? There would be no need to angle the microlenses at the edges of its surface to help capture light at wide angles.

Melvyn Dover, Dorset

If I could unroll a 20in screen from my camera bag and plug it into my camera, I would, Melvyn. I asked Samsung for this about five years ago, but I appreciate these things take time.

A curved sensor might make image stabilisation tricky for in-body systems – Damien Demolder, Editor

BACK CHAT

AP reader Dave Swann recalls taking window-light portraits with a Zenit-B in his garden shed

THE WORDS 'window-light portraits' (AP 7 January) suggest an age before electronic flash, tungsten lighting and the ubiquitous flash brolly. Many was the time I shot such pictures using a simple set-up of a Zenit-B with 58mm standard lens, and two pieces of hardboard onto which I'd stuck a few polystyrene ceiling tiles painted with white emulsion. They made perfect reflectors, and when the weather was on my side I achieved some nice images near the large bay window in my living room.

A neighbour who was moving house offered me his old garden shed. Once I'd transferred it to my garden, I set about adapting it for daylight portraits. I fixed a 3ft sq of see-through frost-effect plastic as a window on each side of the shed. In the roof I fitted another piece, which gave lovely soft overhead light. With a stool immediately beneath for my subjects, I was able to control the light with dark-coloured towels on each 'window' or a suitably placed reflector where required. With my tripod-mounted camera set up just outside the shed door, I was quite thrilled with my garden-shed 'studio'. The result was beautiful, soft, diffused daylight portraits far more pleasing than those taken using flash.

Using b&w film meant I could also experiment with a couple of old Photax tungsten lights, too. But some of my best shots came from making use of diffused daylight. It's cheap, effective and can produce great results.

AP's *Icons of photography* series recently highlighted the work of the wonderful Jane Bown (AP 26 November 2011). Anyone who doubts the power of available-light portraits need look no further than Jane's 1/60sec at f/2.8 method of working. Jane decided long ago that despite the awesome array of lighting equipment available, nothing beats the ultra-simple approach of daylight.

When I switched to using colour slide film, mainly for portraits of the kids, I eventually settled for 3M 640 ASA tungsten-balanced film with which I employed two 500-watt tungsten cine lights. I would bounce these from the ceiling or filter them through an umbrella. As a continuous light source they enabled me to see exactly what I was about to capture on film before taking the shot. However, the heat from the lights was excessive, particularly during the summer. And in hindsight, 25 years later, the graininess of a 640 ASA film wasn't ideal for portraits of children.

My garden shed was blown down a few years ago, but I'm thinking of constructing another, especially as we have three photogenic grandchildren.

I've also recently bought an old Pentax Spotmatic F with a 135mm Takumar lens and have a dozen cassettes of Ilford HP5 in my freezer. All that, plus AP's aptly timed feature on window-light portraits tells me that the gods are directing me towards using the daylight they so generously provide for free.

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Award-winning Cathal McNaughton has more than ten years' experience covering conflicts and breaking news for national newspapers and international press agencies. He shares his best press photographs and reveals how he captures a subject in ways that others haven't seen

To see more images by Cathal or to book a place on one of his workshops visit www.cathalmcnaughton.com

To take part in a free street photography Masterclass with Cathal, send an email with your name, address, telephone number and a couple of sentences about your photographic interests and experience to apppicturedesk@ipcmmedia.com

PHOTO INSIGHT

Cathal McNaughton recalls the limited light and copious dust that caused difficulties when taking this emotive image of a soldier in Iraq

I TOOK this picture in Iraq about four years ago. It shows British soldiers on patrol in Basra shortly before the British Armed Forces' handover of Basra province to the Iraqis on 16 December 2007. I was in Iraq for about a week or so, and I got to know the soldiers as well as I could in that short space of time. You do get to know people slightly quicker in these sorts of situations.

We were in the back of an armoured personnel carrier, travelling through Basra. The soldier is looking up through the skylight in the roof and is just about to stand up to see what is going on outside. The moment he stands up he is potentially a target. You can only wonder what is going through his mind. You could interpret the fact he is looking up to the light in lots of different ways, but ultimately I don't know what's going on in his head. Whatever he is thinking, it's private. This personal moment could be indicative of the wider conflict – he could be anybody's son, husband or brother. The soldier represents those moments experienced by many other servicemen and women – he is, in a way, everyone.

It was really quiet in the vehicle at this time as nobody was talking. The soldiers and I would have been chatting beforehand – when we were being briefed before going out on patrol, for example – but right then it was silent. You are sharing an experience that not many members of the public will go through, so there is a kind of shared bond between you and the soldiers.

This image asks a lot of questions and you couldn't give a definitive meaning to it even if you wanted to. I was just trying to convey how daunting a task it was being a soldier in Iraq at the time. The soldier looks very pensive and I wanted to capture his expression.

I like the way the light is falling on his face and that, although there are two people in the frame, you can only see one of their faces. The other soldier has his head down and is almost completely shrouded in shadow. You can surmise that both are deep in thought, perhaps thinking about home, or the patrol.

As a photographer in a situation like this, lots of things are going through your own mind. I would have been concentrating on



© CATHAL MCNAUGHTON

the technical side of creating the image, such as making sure the exposure was right. As I had already taken an exposure reading for the top of the helmet, I knew what the exposure would be so it was just a question of waiting for the soldier to look up.

The vehicle was dark inside, making it difficult to take any shots at all. In addition, the terrain was very bumpy and rough – so not really conducive to taking photographs. Whenever the soldier looked up towards the light, I took the opportunity to fire off a couple of frames.

I took the minimum amount of equipment with me so I could travel light. I was wearing full body armour like the soldiers (although I wasn't dressed in camouflage gear). I was using two Canon EOS-1D Mark II cameras, one with a 70-200mm lens attached and the other with a 16-35mm lens. I knew there wouldn't be much room to manoeuvre inside the vehicle, so I'd purposefully taken my wideangle lens with me.

As soon as you take the lens off your camera in a desert environment, dust



gets onto the sensor. Consequently, you can't change your lens when out on patrol. This goes for the entire duration of the tour because the dust is everywhere. The only solution is to leave the lenses on the cameras.

It is my job to photograph what is in front of me as honestly as I can, but there has to be a sensitivity towards the subjects, too. There's a fine line between trying to respect the soldiers' feelings and their space, and recording what's going on. Generally, the soldiers want people at home to know

what is going on – to see what they are going through and how hard it can be. If you can get it across to the soldiers that you are there to record what's happening and don't have your own agenda, they are happy for you to be there. If they don't want you taking their picture, they'll soon let you know. These guys have other things to think about anyway, so they forget about you quite quickly. I generally like to fade into the background as much as possible so I can get on with my job.

You have to work hard to capture the

atmosphere in a still image of what it is like to be in a situation such as this. However, the power of the photograph remains – a single image can grab the attention of the viewer, perhaps more so than rolling news, which we can sometimes become desensitised to. People can look at a photograph in their own time, come back to it, ponder what it is they're looking at and think about what the picture makes them feel. The viewer has more control over when and how they view that image. **AP**

Cathal McNaughton was talking to Gemma Padley

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Dream come true

Following an impressive series of entries, Italian photographer **Simona Bonanno** has won this year's Amateur Photographer of the Year competition. She speaks to **Oliver Atwell**

IT'S BEEN a tough 12 months for the judges of AP's annual Amateur Photographer of the Year competition. Every year the entries get better and better, with photographers from all over the world sending in their interpretations of the month's theme. The 2011 winner had a difficult act to follow, as Ireland-based photographer Sean Slevin's technically accomplished images saw him top the overall competition in 2010. However, 2011 belongs to Italian photographer Simona Bonanno, who wins £5,000 worth of Canon photographic equipment.

'I'm so happy,' says Simona from her home in Italy. 'Winning APOY is, obviously, a great honour. Until the last round I thought that being first in this competition was a pipe dream. It was challenging, stimulating and exciting, and it allowed me to mature photographically through each round. I also learned a lot by examining the photographs of the other competitors.'

However, 2011 wasn't the first year that Simona had tried her luck in the competition. In fact, this is the second year that the APOY judges have seen her images. 'APOY was something that I came across by chance on



Round 4

Simona's simple yet effective macro shot of grass (Macro in nature)

Round 2



 the internet,' says Simona. 'That was in 2010. It was frustrating because by the time I discovered the competition, it was already the penultimate round. I ended up coming third in that round, though, so I knew I had to make sure that I entered from the start the following year.'

Simona entered every round in 2011 and her consistency paid off. She was placed in the top 50 for all ten rounds, winning round 5 (Creative wildlife), and coming third in rounds 2 (Inside a building) and 9 (Black & white).

'I was really impressed by the choice of themes for each month,' Simona continues. 'There was enough information to give you an idea of what the judges wanted to see, but also enough scope to interpret the themes in an individual way. Seeing my images share space with so many different interpretations of the same theme was inspiring. The images from all the other entrants were very strong.'

IN THE BEGINNING

Simona was born in Messina, Italy, in 1974, to a family firmly entrenched in the arts. As a result, her passion for all things creative was in many ways predestined.

'A large majority of my family were and still are involved in the arts,' says Simona. 'My grandmother was a painter, as was my grandfather. Other members of my family have jobs like photographers and interior designers. It was my mother who gave me my first camera, a Nikon F3. What appealed to me about photography right away was

Simona's shot taken inside a cinema and featuring her aunt and grandmother (Inside a building)

the ability to freeze a single moment – to be able to capture a fraction of time for ever is a magical notion. But that leads onto the other thing that fascinates me – photography's tenuous relationship with reality. Things in photographs seem almost unreal. You don't know what happened before and after a photograph, so anything is possible.'

Simona's passion for image-making led her to study photography at art school, somewhere she was able to develop her creative vision.

'It was when I was studying that I really began to grow as a photographer,' says Simona. 'I attended art school in Italy and then in Paris. In those early days, geometric shapes and lines fascinated me. They became the main focus of my images and it was through those ideas that I began to understand the basics of composition and framing. More than that, though, I began to realise there was a real virtue in simplicity.'

After graduating, Simona took a break from photography to develop her career. 'When I finished my studies, I trained for my job,' she says. 'I'm a graphic and web designer, as well as an illustrator. All these things help to inspire my photography. However, another reason for me taking a break from photography was that I really didn't feel motivated. That was largely due to the fact that my photography tutor at art school kept telling me that while I had a flair for photography, it would be better for me to try my hand at something else. He was always unhappy with the fact that

my photographs were too creative! Some people are incredibly resistant to art-based photography. They'd much rather see something more straightforward.'

While Simona now uses a Nikon D80 and Canon EOS 7D, her initial forays into photography involved her working with film. 'I started taking photographs before the rise of digital imaging, in around 1998, so I was working with film,' she says. 'That then led to working with slides, particularly Kodachrome. The natural-looking colours fascinated me. It's a look that people are still attempting to replicate using digital cameras.'

Several years later I came across those same slides that I had been working with back in the '90s. I took them into a photo lab to get them printed, but when I got them back I was horrified. The colours were so different to what I had seen all those years ago. The quality had really degraded. It was then that I decided to switch to digital imaging. I already had experience working with post-processing software due to my job, so it wasn't a problem for me. I was lucky in that starting with film gave me the confidence and technical knowledge to move comfortably into digital imaging. I think it really helps to have that grounding.'

However, that's not to say that Simona has completely abandoned film altogether. 'Film is a difficult thing to give up,' says Simona. 'Once you've shot using film, you never forget the magic of processing negatives and producing prints. I have a darkroom in my home – I just wish I had more time to use it.'

To see more images by Simona, visit her website at www.simonabonanno.com

GETTING THE SHOTS

Everyone has a different method of finding a subject to photograph. Some actively explore a scene or subject until their preconceived ideas of it are fulfilled, while others allow chance and random encounters to take over. However, for Simona it was a little of both.

'When I saw the APOY themes at the beginning of 2011, I was able to look back at some of my previous photos and see what inspiration I could find,' says Simona. 'That helped me determine what I needed to go out and shoot. There were other times, though, when I would come across a shot by chance and it would fit into an appropriate theme further down the line. It was like a game, and it was a real challenge.'

'As the competition progressed, I had to select one image when I was top of the APOY leader board and that was incredibly difficult. As soon as I'd selected an image to submit, a thousand things would go through my mind. I would doubt myself and question if I'd really made the right decision.'

Looking through Simona's images, it's difficult not to notice her penchant for shooting in monochrome. 'Black & white is something that fascinates me,' says Simona. 'As well as being atmospheric, it forces you to see the essence of an image. It draws people's attention to a subject. That's not to say that I don't enjoy working with colour. It's just that I tend to see the world in black & white tones.'

Simona's only colour submission was for

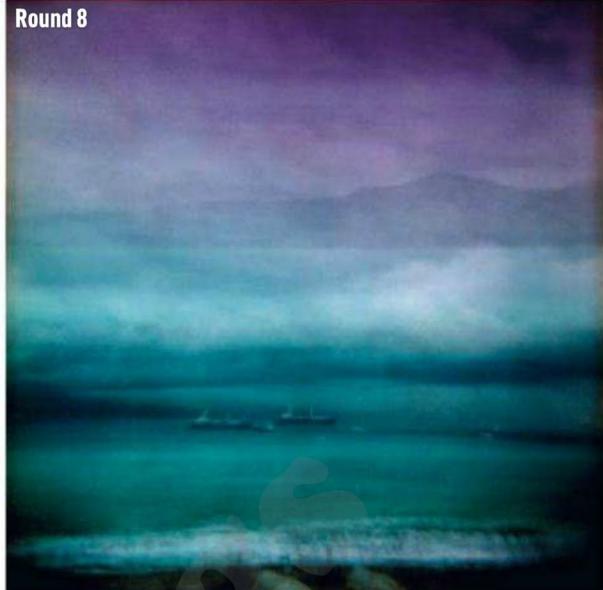
round 8 (see right). 'The entry for Shooting skies was in colour because I felt it needed those tones to represent the magical atmosphere of the location, which was the Strait of Messina between Sicily and the southern tip of Italy,' says Simona.

'I used a Holga CFN 120 medium-format film camera with an expired film. The shot is actually a double exposure. I was trying to recreate an effect known as a Fata Morgana, a mirage that gets its name from the Italian phrase derived from the Latin for mirage and the name of the Arthurian sorceress Morgan Le Fay. The belief is that the mirages often seen in the Strait of Messina are fairy castles and false land that are created by Le Fay to lure sailors to their deaths.'

FAVOURITE SHOTS

There are two shots that Simona favours over all her other entries. The first is Simona's dramatic image of a bull (see below), her entry for round 5 (Creative wildlife). 'Every year I spend a week in Camargue, in southern France,' she says. 'It's a wonderful region where there are a lot of wild animals, such as horses, bulls and flamingos. I've been fascinated by bulls ever since I saw an exhibition that displayed Picasso's drawings of bullfighting. He was able to represent the bull's power with just a simple line drawing. It was important for me, when photographing the bull, to show its power and elegance. Another major influence on the image was the Palaeolithic

Round 8



ALL PICTURES © SIMONA BONANINO

Above: A double exposure of the Strait of Messina (Shooting skies)

Below: Simona's abstract portrait of a bull saw her take first place in Round 5 (Creative wildlife)

cave paintings in Lascaux, southern France.'

Simona is also particularly fond of her entry for round 2 (Inside a building), a picture that holds a particularly personal relevance for her (see page 20). 'The two women featured in that image are my aunt and grandmother,' she says. 'My grandmother wasn't exactly happy about being photographed in the cinema, but when she saw the photo she loved it. I believe that if she were still here today she would be incredibly proud of me.'

Round 5



APOY 2011 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

SIMONA'S SHORTLISTED IMAGES

Round 1 Shooting trees

Round 2 Inside a building

Round 3 Streets and walkways

Round 4 Macro in nature

Round 5 Creative wildlife

Round 6 People at home

Round 7 Away from home

Round 8 Shooting skies

Round 9 Black & white

Round 10 Shooting at night

Round 1



Round 3



Round 6



Round 10



Round 7



Round 9



APOY 2012

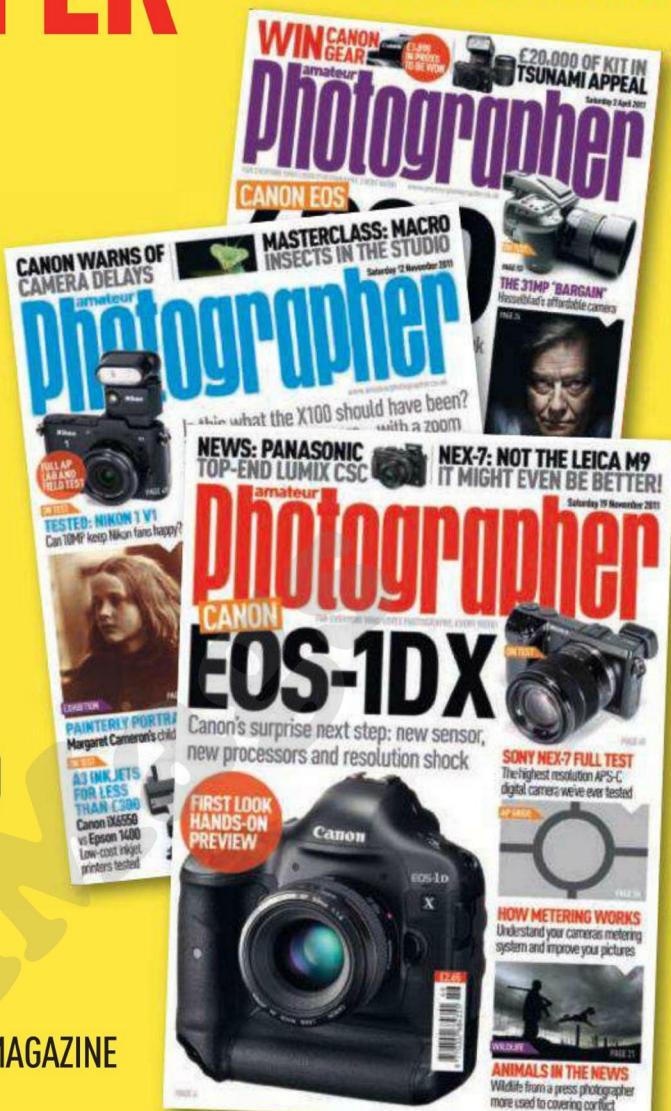
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2



David Brabiner Derbyshire

David has always been fascinated by the natural world, so it was a logical step to attempt to combine this with his love of photography. Where much of his early photography found him travelling overseas, David's more recent ventures have found him focusing on the wildlife native to the UK and captive exotic species. David also says that his children's thirst for knowledge has opened his eyes to aspects of nature that he would not otherwise have seen. In the future, he would love to visit the Antarctic and shoot its underwater world.

Frog

1 The reflection in the shallow pool balances this marbled reed frog within the frame
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 100mm, 1/200sec at f/14, ISO 200

Green iguana

2 This image perfectly illustrates the lizard's ability to blend into its environment
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 100-400mm, 1/400secs at f/5.6, ISO 200

Tree frog

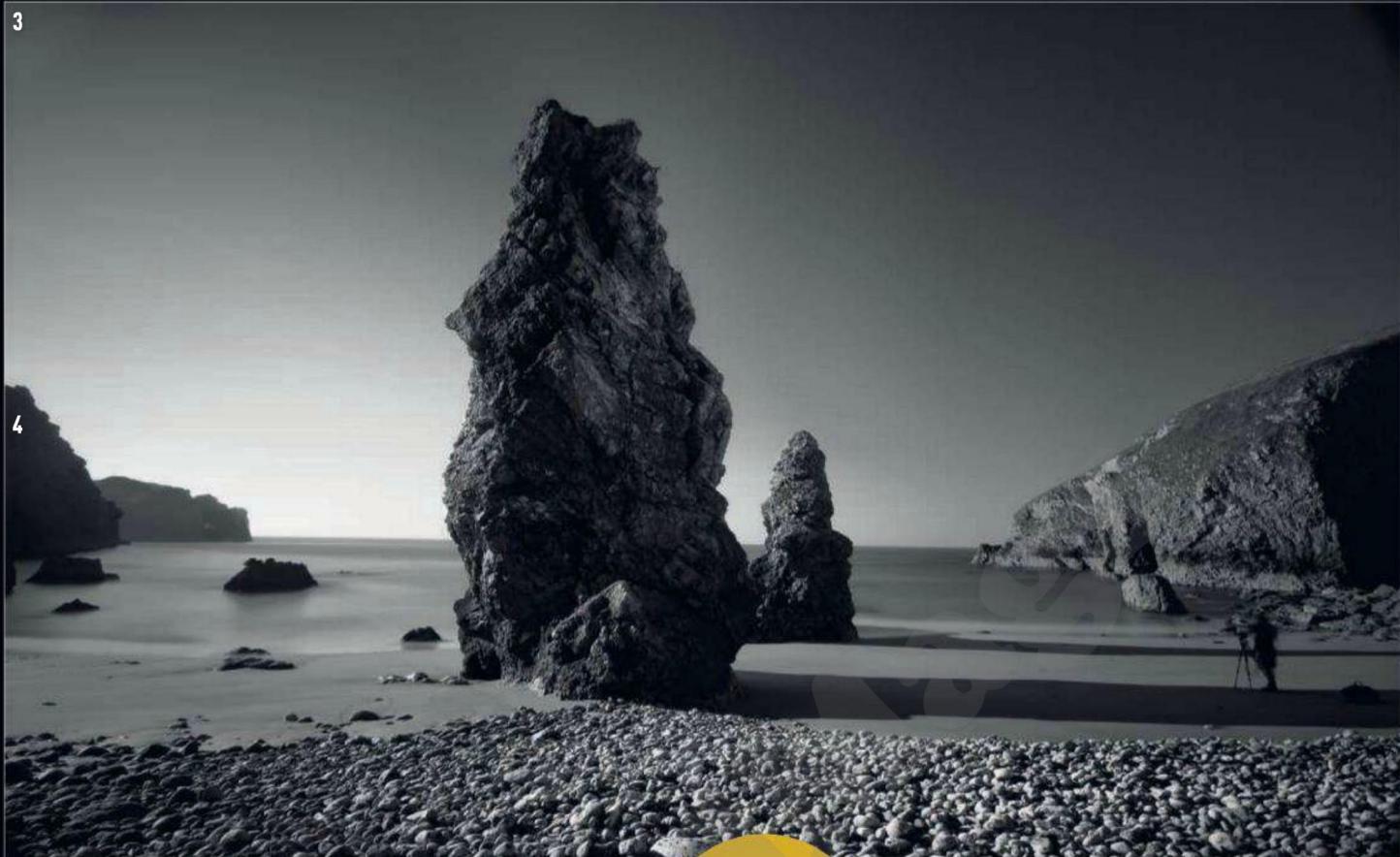
3 David has caught this amphibian as it clings to the tip of the plant
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 100mm, 1/200sec at f/14, ISO 200, studio flashes

3





3



4

4

Alwyn Cooper Gloucestershire

While at school in the mid-1980s, Alwyn saved up the princely sum of £40 for an old Zenit TTL camera and used it to learn the basics of photography and to annoy his friends. Eventually it stopped working and this led to Alwyn not taking any photos at all for a couple of decades. In 2006, he picked up a camera again and set about photographing landscapes, both natural and man-made. In the future, Alwyn plans to take fewer photographs but to visit more places and shoot a wider variety of subjects with more attention to detail.



This is a sensational picture that looks as much like a still life as it does a landscape. The lighting is glorious. The simplicity of lines and shapes makes what could have been a complex scene into something really graphic, while the tones are perfect. It's a great picture. *Damien Demolder, Editor*



Pembroke Castle

1 This building makes a dramatic statement about architectural longevity
Canon EOS 450D, 10-20mm, 31secs at f/11, ISO 100, ND filter, polariser, tripod

Tenby Harbour

2 The composition of this scene was what attracted Alwyn to the location
Canon EOS 450D, 10-20mm, 1/40sec at f/11, ISO 100, polariser

Flimston Stacks

3 Including Alwyn's brother-in-law gives a sense of scale to this image
Canon EOS 450D, 10-20mm, 67secs at f/11, ISO 100, ND filter, polariser, tripod

Monkstone Point

4 The sharp geometry of the rock against the minimalist sea works well here
Canon EOS 450D, 10-20mm, 62secs at f/16, ISO 100, ND filter, polariser, tripod

1



King vulture

1 The unusual framing and composition make this a compelling shot
Olympus E-1, 50-500mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100

Painted lady

2 This shot makes excellent use of natural backlighting
Olympus E-3, 50-200mm, 1/250sec at f/13, ISO 800

Bee

3 This shot demonstrates the industrious nature of bees
Olympus E-3, 50mm, 1/200sec at f/16, ISO 100, 2x converter, flash, diffuser

2



3



Thea Love Hampshire

Thea's first camera was an Olympus OM-1N, which she soon upgraded to an OM-2N. Photography took a backseat when her daughter was born, but in recent years Thea's love of photography has been reignited. These days, Thea uses a digital camera and her primary focus is on the natural world, particularly birds, bugs and butterflies. While she identifies birds in flight and landscape as her photographic weak points, she is determined to improve her skills in these areas.

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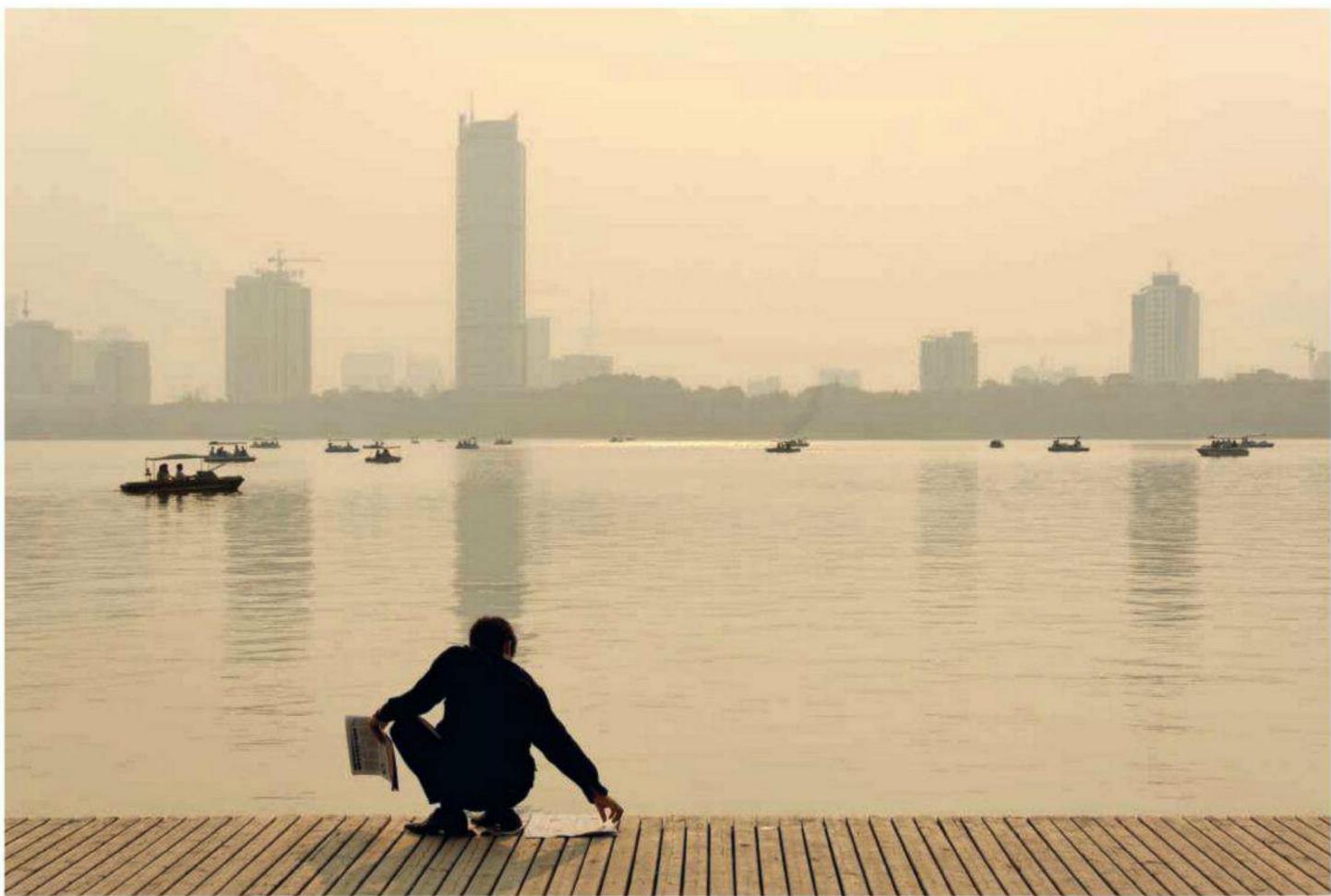
Michael Freeman looks at the age-old concept of the leading line – a device that has more possibilities than you may think

ONE OF the stock components in anything written about composition in photography is the leading line. However, like other members of the compositional cast, such as juxtaposition, complementary

colours and the Golden Section (not the Rule of Thirds), it tends to be presented as a kind of ideal rule, with check boxes of what you should and shouldn't do. Really, though, leading lines are just one way of trying to

direct the viewer to look at your photograph in a particular way – a graphic device that sits separately from the actual subject matter, the content.

I'd better explain what I mean by 'separately'. Photographs have two layers (at least two layers, but these are the ones relevant here). One layer is the scene itself. Overlaid on this is graphic structure. This is the composition, if you like, and, depending on where you stand, how you frame and a few other techniques, it can connect or divide things in a way that has little to do with what's going on in the scene. One simple, even trivial example is the picture taken on a boardwalk by a lake in Nanjing, China (see below). Obviously, the skyscraper and its reflection have nothing to do with the man

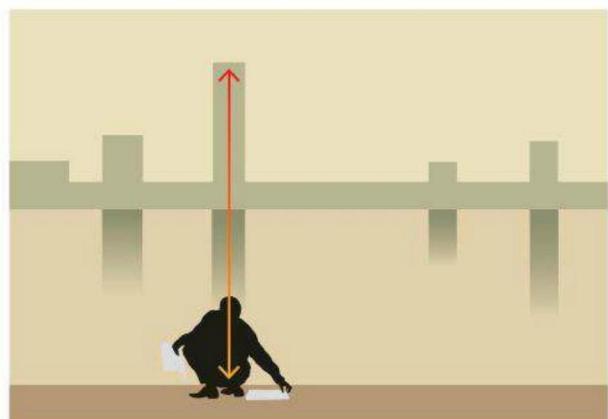


UNRELATED ALIGNMENT

SHOOTING into hazy late-afternoon sunshine across a lake made silhouettes and reflections predictable in this image (above). The boardwalk provided a platform for things going on in the foreground, and in fact the situation produced a few different good images. In this case, the man

crouching offered the irresistible opportunity of aligning him with the high-rise building and its reflection. So, a simple horizontal-and-vertical composition makes an ordered image out of unrelated subjects. This is an example of how lines and alignments are entirely the photographer's choice.

'The boardwalk provided a platform for things going on in the foreground'



bending down, but the juxtaposition helps give the image a structure. In a way, this is a leading line, but also a kind of graphic correspondence that some photographers, including me, like to make.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, who probably did more than anyone else to promote the cause of rapid composition as a way of making sense of an image, had a famous idiosyncrasy, which was to look at contact sheets upside down. This took the recognisable subject out of the equation, leaving just the graphic organisation. Magnum photographer René Burri wrote, 'I would produce contact sheets for him to critique. I remember him studying them upside down to study the composition.' Cartier-Bresson's ideas about lines include: 'A photographer can bring coincidence of line simply by moving his head a fraction of a millimetre', and, 'In photography there is a new kind of plasticity, the product of instantaneous lines made by movements of the subject.'

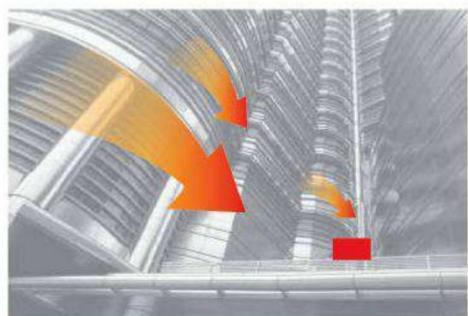
Leading the eye has long been an ambition among many graphic artists, from painters to photographers, and essentially it means persuading the viewer to experience the image in a particular order, seeing one thing first, then moving on to another. Lines are the most obvious way of 'pointing' towards something in the frame, and they work because we see them as having a direction – they encourage the eye to travel along them.

One of the features of our visual system is that by nature we are always trying to find simple graphic structures



A CURVE TO FOCUS DIRECTION

THE UPWARD sweep of a bright Indian sari being re-adjusted by a pilgrim on a boat in the Ganges in the image below creates a strong curve that acts graphically like a converging lens, drawing the viewer's attention in towards the centre and right of the image.

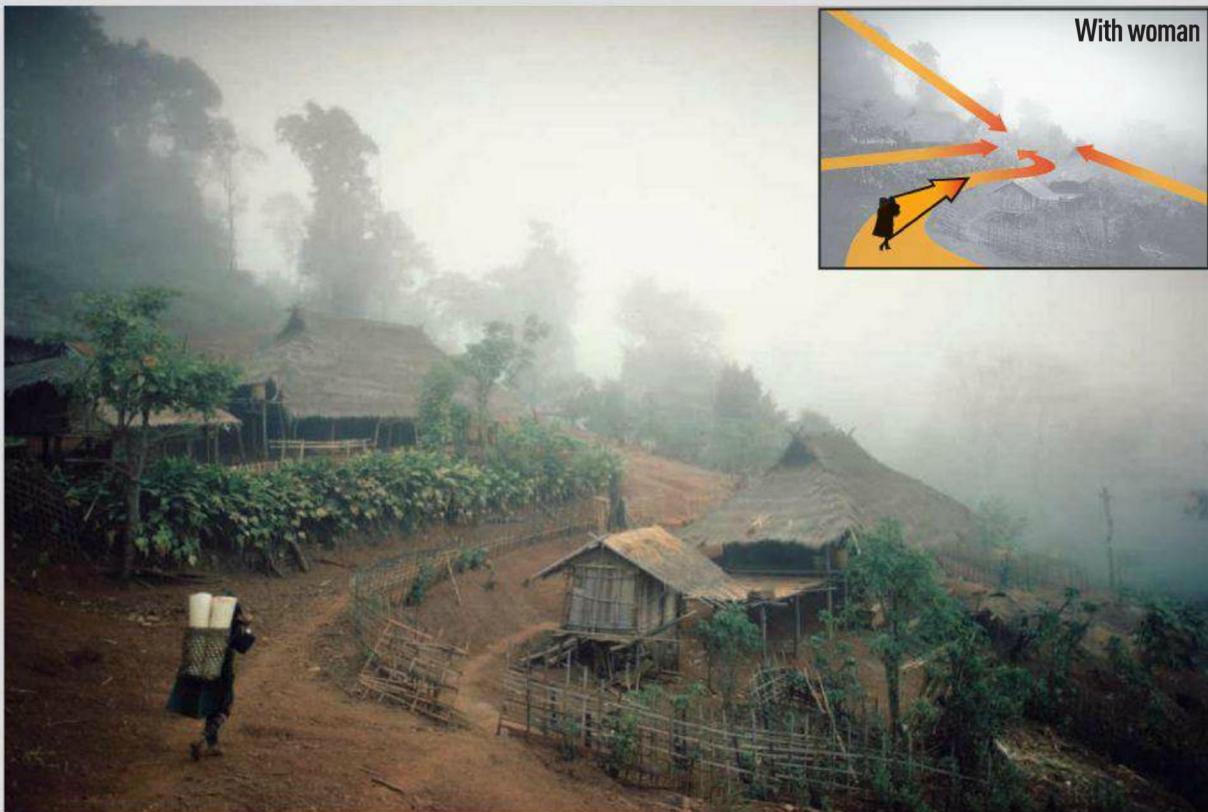


POINTING TO A SMALL SUBJECT

THE PICTURE above shows two women on a walkway of the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The subject began as the building, but the contrast of tradition (the women's dress) against the almost futuristic architecture was hard

to resist, and I changed my attention to this. The architecture had to dominate as much as possible, but the question was, how far could the contrast of scale be pushed without losing the women from attention? In other words, I wanted the attention to

be taken first by the building and then, as a slight surprise, settle on the women. Closing in with the zoom would lose this surprise. The solution was to make use of the lines of the architecture to guide the eye, using a wideangle (20mm) lens and adjusting the camera position. The large curved mass on the left dominates at first glance. Then the repeated curved lines lead the eye along them inwards and down, where they meet the low baseline of the walkway.



PERCEIVED MOVEMENT

IN THIS image of an ethnic minority hill village (above), the presence of a woman carrying banana trunks and walking along the path makes an important contribution to the dynamics. The lines already converge, as the diagram (below) shows, but the woman, walking, puts it all in motion. The image (left) shows the scene without the woman.



in what we look at, 'joining the dots' as the expression goes. The Gestalt laws of grouping explain much of this, in particular the law of Good Continuation, in which the eye links different visual elements to make a smooth contour, such as a straight or curving line, regardless of what these elements actually are in the real world. A tree, a house and a person can together make a line in the mind's eye from a certain viewpoint.

So what makes a line? There are apparent lines, such as the edge of a building, a picket fence or the horizon, and then there are

'A tree, a house and a person can together make a line in the mind's eye from a certain viewpoint'

suggested lines, which include eyelines, a row of objects and even motion. Edge lines are the most obvious, and for this reason they're not necessarily the most interesting. The less evident ones, which work more by the power of suggestion, have more going for them simply because they are more

subtle, but they run the risk in composition of being overlooked. When used with some skill, though, an implied line can 'point' just as surely towards something in the frame as can an obvious edge line.

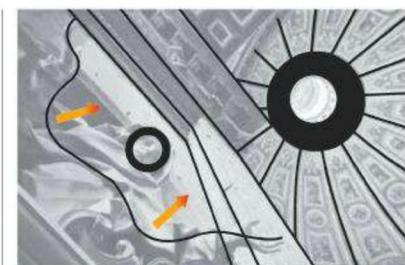
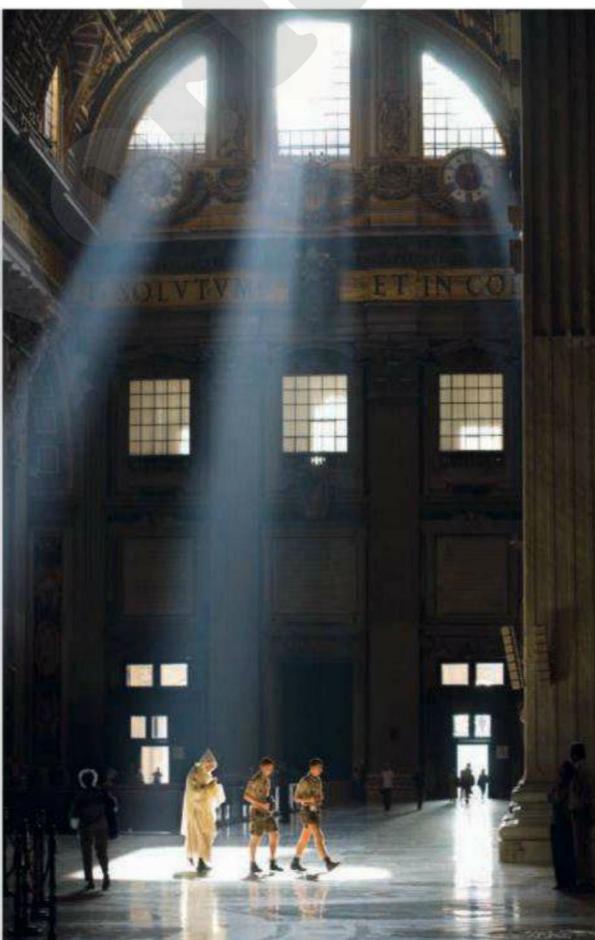
Leading the eye from one part of the frame to another has two particular uses. One is to draw attention to a specific feature, and because the attention is going to be forced towards it, you then have the opportunity to keep it small. This is a useful technique when, for example, you want to slow down the way someone



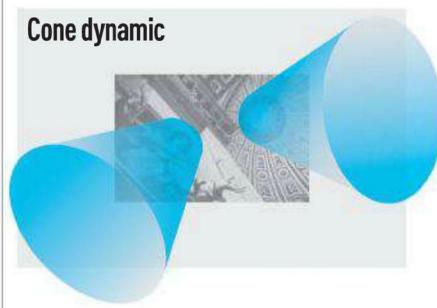
ALL PICTURES ©MICHAEL FREEMAN

LIGHT MADE VISIBLE

SHAFTS of light need certain conditions – dark surroundings, direct sunlight through a window or opening, and atmosphere – and all these are present in this early morning shot (right). All that remains is to wait for a subject to enter the shaft of light. I adjusted this shot in post-processing by increasing the Brightness (+55) and Contrast (+49). This helps to bring out the light against the dark environment.



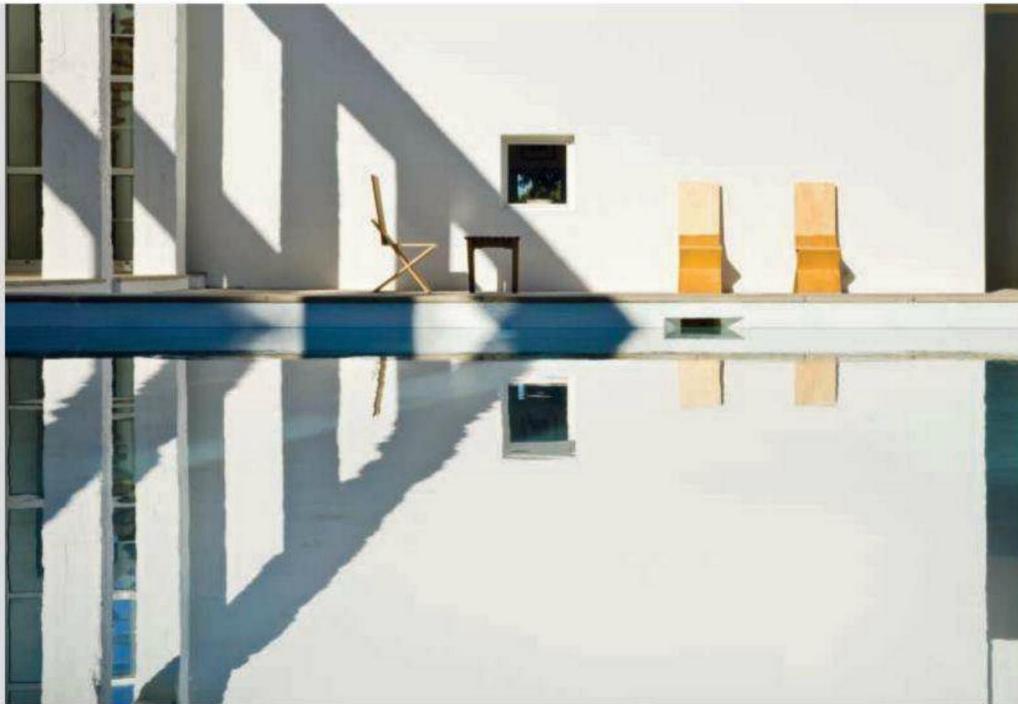
Cone dynamic



BY SHOOTING almost vertically and tilting the camera to make the most of crossed diagonals (the edges of the column and pelmet versus the implied diagonal of the face and dome skylight), this shot taken in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, uses a combination of techniques to drive the eye inwards and towards the oculus, or skylight. Apart from the obvious radiating lines on the cupola (dome), the perspective gives a subtle cone-like dynamic, while the arms of the Virgin shepherd lead the viewer's eyes up from the lower left.

MIRRORED DIAGONALS CONVERGE

THE STARK contrast of hard-edged shadows falling on the columns and wall of a modernist villa in Portugal, all doubled and reinforced by reflections in an unruffled swimming pool, make sure that the lines in this image dominate the attention. The diagonals, as usual, attract the most interest and give the image its dynamism, and this effect helps to sweep the eye from left to right towards the two yellow chairs. The viewer's eye finally stops at the vertical edge on the right.



'Light has a leading effect because our eyes want to move from dark to light'

 will look at the image, in order to make it a little more interesting. The other is simply to create a perceived movement across the frame, which will inevitably help to make the view coherent. When it can be made to work, this adds a new level of interest, and even complexity, to an image. Also, because the idea of leading the eye involves some kind of sequence, starting here and then ending there, it brings the extra dimension of time to a still image.

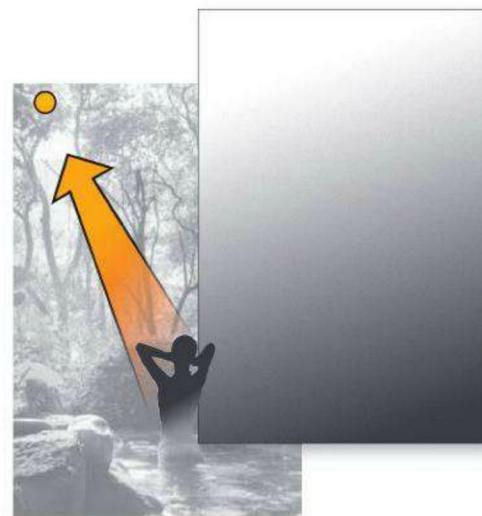
The angle of the line also plays a part. In terms of energy, noticeability and sense of movement (in other words, vector), the strongest is the diagonal and the weakest is the horizontal. Verticals come somewhere in between, relating to a feeling of gravity, whether up or down. For instance, a definite diagonal with one end close to a corner and the other near the centre will almost always help to channel the gaze along it. Other diagonals leading to the centre from other parts of the frame reinforce this – and this is exactly what happens with a wideangle lens and straight-edged subjects, such as buildings, in producing strong linear perspective.

A visible shaft of light – as occurs in large dark spaces that have some atmosphere and when sunlight pours in through a small opening – is even stronger (see page 35). It combines a graphic line with the power of illumination to give a 'finger of God' effect. This a special case, and hard to resist shooting because of that, but it also opens up the issue of using light and brightness as another way of moving the attention of the viewer across the frame. Light has a leading effect because our eyes want to

EYELINE AND BRIGHTNESS GRADIENT



EYELINES can be assumed just by a pose, such as this one of a bathing girl (left). The diagonal 'line' is obvious enough, even though there is nothing visible like an edge. What reinforces it is a tonal gradient that takes the eye up towards the just visible sun through the leaves. Placing the sun in the corner helps the sense of a diagonal.



move from dark to light. The 'light at the end of a tunnel' is a perfect example of this, and in this kind of picture it is almost impossible to take the eyes off a single bright patch. A brightness gradient alone can lead the eye along it, and in combination with some kind of line, such as the assumed eyeline in the spa bathing shot (above), it is even stronger. For this reason, the vignetting common with

wideangle lenses – a reduction of an image's brightness or saturation at the edges of the frame compared to the image centre – is by no means necessarily a problem. Image-processing software like Photoshop and Lightroom can remove it as part of a 'lens-correction' suite, but I often prefer to keep it as it's another way of guiding a viewer's eye through your image. **AP**

To see more pictures by Michael Freeman, visit www.michaelfreemanphoto.com

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Earthrise from the Moon

by William Anders



© NASA

Right: The famous 'Earthrise' view that greeted the Apollo 8 astronauts as they came from behind the Moon after their fourth orbit

Below: Apollo 8 crew members (l-r): James Lovell, William Anders and Frank Borman

Although Apollo 8's mission was to orbit the Moon, its most famous image revealed a new perspective on the Earth, writes **David Clark**

IN 1961, President John F Kennedy confidently announced a national ambition that excited the world. 'I believe,' he declared, 'that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.' After years of work by US scientists and astronauts, that goal came much closer with the Apollo 8 mission in 1968.

By this time, the Cold War 'Space Race' between the USA and the Soviet Union was intensifying. The Soviets had launched several Zond spacecraft, and in September 1968 Zond 5 had made a successful journey around the Moon and back to Earth. NASA scientists, anxious not to be beaten in the race to the Moon, responded by declaring that Apollo 8 would be the first manned flight in lunar orbit.

The three-man crew consisted of mission Commander Frank Borman, Command Module Pilot James Lovell and Lunar Module Pilot William Anders. The three men, on board a Saturn V rocket, launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on 21 December 1968.

Recording both still and moving images of the Earth and the Moon from the spacecraft were an essential part of the mission. Around 30 hours into the flight, the crew used a lightweight television camera to broadcast images back to Earth in black & white. They showed the expectant millions of viewers the inside of the spacecraft and their first basic images of the Earth.

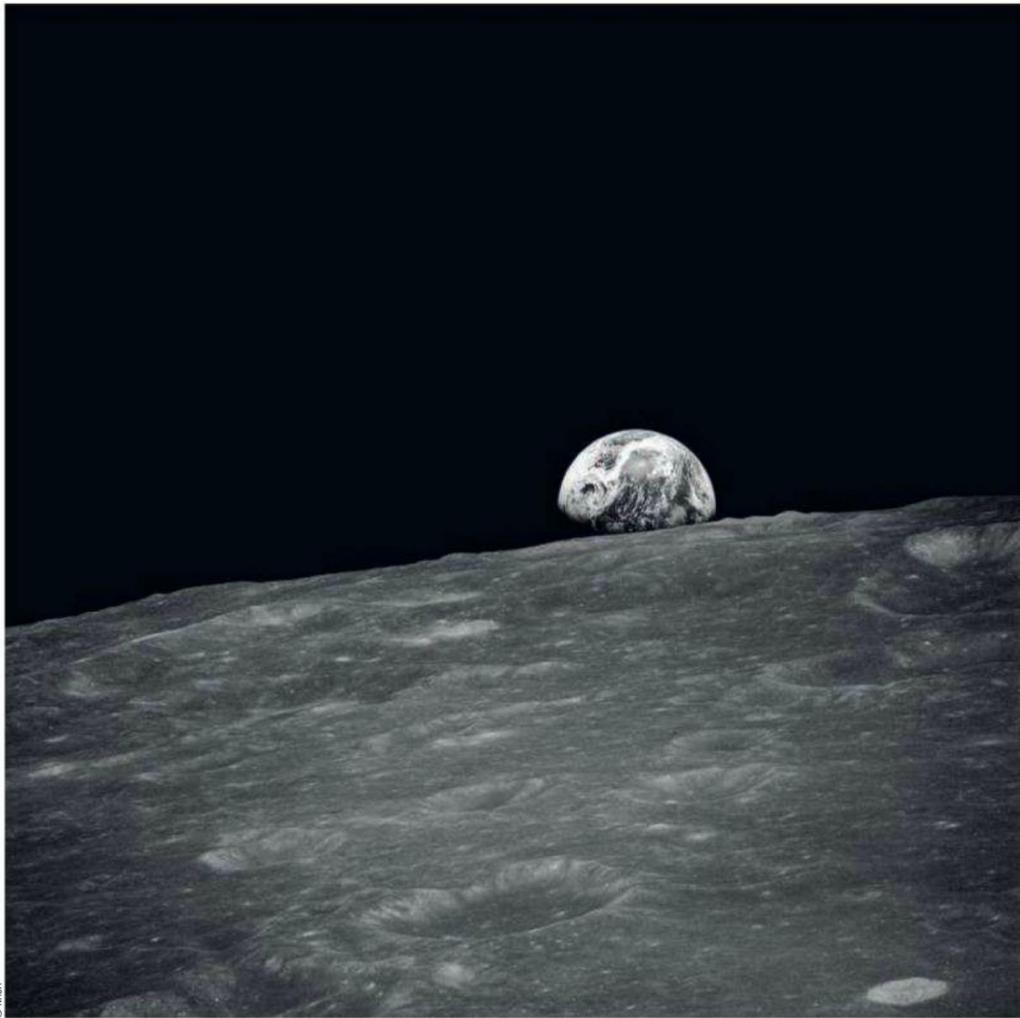
In the second broadcast, 15 hours later, the crew was able to shoot much more detailed moving images of the Earth by using a telephoto lens on the film camera. Filters were used to prevent the bright light being reflected from the Earth burning out details of the surface.

The crew was also equipped with two Hasselblad 70mm still cameras and stocks of both black & white and colour film. As the spacecraft entered lunar orbit, William Anders photographed the Moon's arid surface while a film camera automatically recorded moving images.

During the fourth orbit, on 24 December, Borman looked out and saw the Earth appearing from behind the Moon; it had been previously photographed by unmanned robot spacecraft, but this was the first time it had been witnessed by humans.

He said to the others, 'Oh my God. Look at that picture over there. Here's the Earth coming up. Wow! That is pretty.' It's thought that at this point Borman shot a black & white image of the scene with the Earth poised just above the





© NASA

Moon's surface (see above).

Anders joked, 'Hey, don't take that, it's not scheduled!' He then added, 'Hand me that roll of colour, quick.' After a brief scramble to find the film, Anders shot a colour photograph using a 250mm lens.

The photograph (see page 39) showed the Earth as a blue planet, partially covered by white swirling shapes of clouds, standing out against the black backdrop of space. It contrasted strongly with the grey lunar surface, which Borman described as 'a vast, lonely, forbidding expanse of nothing.' He later commented that seeing the Earth was 'the most beautiful, heart-catching sight of my life, one that sent a torrent of nostalgia, of sheer homesickness, surging through me.'

Anders shot two similar 'Earthrise' images before the spacecraft's orbit made it impossible to photograph the Earth and Moon in the same frame with the 250mm. He changed to an 80mm lens to photograph the scene, but the wider angle of view also included parts of the spacecraft and these images were not successful.

Anders' photograph was shot with the Moon's surface shown vertically on the right of the frame and the Earth to the left, but it is often shown with the Moon at the bottom of the frame and the Earth above it.

During the mission, the crew orbited the

Moon ten times during a 20-hour period. They shot 865 images, 589 of which were on black & white film as, at the time, it was capable of recording images of greater clarity and detail.

The three-man crew returned to Earth on 27 December. They had become the first people to enter the gravitational field of another celestial body, the first to see the far side of the Moon and the first to see the Earth as a whole planet. Their work paved the way for the later missions, including Apollo 11's seven months later, during which men walked on the Moon for the first time.

Anders' colour 'Earthrise' photograph was looked at with wonder around the world; it gave a new perspective on the planet at a time of great social and political unrest, and soon became regarded as one of the most iconic images of the century. Looking back on the mission, Anders said his most memorable experience was seeing the new perspective on the Earth that his photograph captured.

'When I looked up and saw the Earth coming up on this very stark, beat-up lunar horizon, an Earth that was the only colour we could see, a very fragile-looking Earth, a very delicate-looking Earth, I was immediately almost overcome by the thought that here we came all this way to the Moon and yet the most significant thing we're seeing is our own home planet' AP

BOOKS AND WEBSITES

Books More Apollo mission information and images can be seen in *Space: An Illustrated History of Space Exploration in Photographs* by Andrew Chaikin (foreword by Jim Lovell) and *Destination Moon: The Apollo Missions in the Astronauts' Own Words* by Rod Pyle.

Websites For more information specifically on the Apollo 8 mission, see www.nasa.gov and search for 'Apollo 8'. To see all the images shot on the Apollo 8 mission, visit www.lpi.usra.edu and search for 'Apollo 8 catalog'.

Events of 1968

5 January

Alexander Dubček is elected leader of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia and attempts political reforms in the country

8 January

Prime Minister Harold Wilson gives his approval to the 'I'm Backing Britain' campaign, aimed at boosting the economy. It encourages employees to work an additional half-hour each day without pay

17 March

An anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London's Grosvenor Square erupts in violence, with 200 demonstrators arrested and 91 people injured

4 April

American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr, is assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Several days' rioting follows in many US cities

8 May

Ronnie and Reggie Kray are among a group of men arrested in London for crimes including murder, fraud and blackmail

5 June

Robert F Kennedy, the democratic candidate in the US Presidential election, is shot at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California. He dies the following day

20-21 August

Czechoslovakia is invaded by around 200,000 Warsaw Pact troops and 5,000 tanks. The invasion ends the 'Prague Spring' of political reform

16 October

At the Mexico Olympics, black American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos controversially give a black power salute after the men's 200 metre race

5 November

In the US Presidential election, Republican Richard M Nixon defeats the Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey



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Sensor Swabs



Use a wet cleaning tool to clean away stubborn deposits which a dry clean has difficulty removing.

Always dry clean first, before wet cleaning, to ensure any aggressive dust particles are removed from the sensor.

Lens Brush

Lipstick style retractable lens brush.

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Appraisal

Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor Damien Demolder



The Venetian Charlette Sarmiento

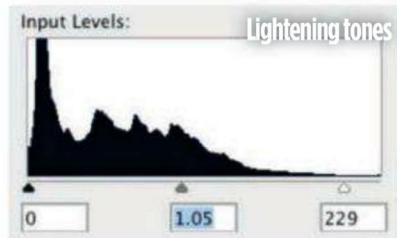
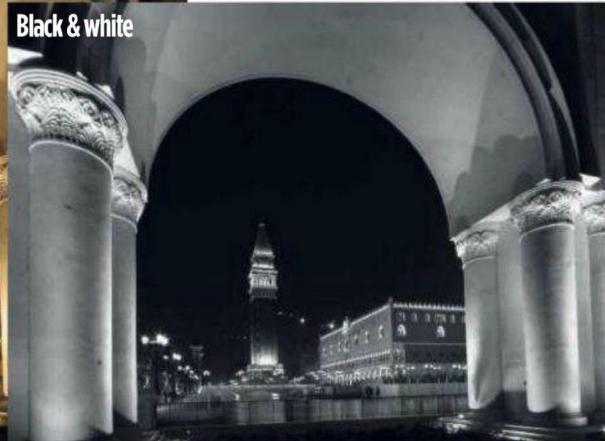
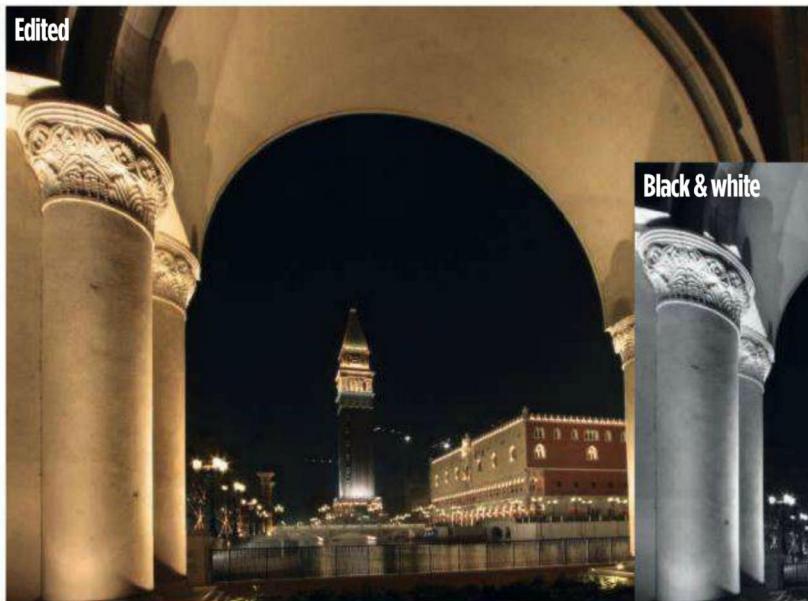
Canon EOS 20D, 10-22mm, 1/45sec at f/20, ISO 100

THIS isn't Venice, but a hotel in Las Vegas in the USA that claims to have produced a better version of the real thing. It has air conditioning and no dog pool! You can tell it is not the real thing as there are doors and air vents in the stonework – among other little giveaways.

Charlette has shot this image from quite a dramatic angle, but with the camera not parallel to the subject or the archway through which she has thoughtfully framed it. As such, the first thing I see is the distortion instead of the bell tower of St Mark's. I've used the Distort>Lens Correction function in

Photoshop to bend the picture so it doesn't appear that the camera was looking up, and you can see how the shape has changed in the example above. I then lightened the midtones and highlights to add a bit more punch, and added saturation while removing the pink tint from the lighting. I like the extra saturation and, with the uprights now upright, the picture has a more formal and professional appearance.

I've also tried a black & white version, leaning heavily on the green channel in Channel Mixer, which has a bit more of a classic feel.



WIN

Every reader whose picture is chosen to appear in *Appraisal* will win a Camlink CMP1 walking stick monopod worth £19.99. The three-section collapsible walking stick monopod features a wrist strap, ergonomic handle and includes a nifty little compass into the bargain. To find out more about Camlink products, visit www.camlink.eu.com

How to submit your pictures

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (please include the original files from the camera along with your submitted versions on your CD). Tell us a little about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 3. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned

CAMLINK



Joy of colour Bidyut Goswami

Nikon D7000, 11-16mm, 1/50sec at f/2.8, ISO 640

THERE are some really powerful elements in this picture from Bidyut. I particularly like the bright colours against the night sky, and judging from his title for the picture that's what caught his eye, too. There are a couple of things, though, that will make this aspect of the photo stand out a bit more and help people to understand more quickly and easily what it was that Bidyut wanted us to see.

First, I've lightened the picture slightly by lifting the midtones in Levels, while at the same time making the shadows more intense by dragging the left-hand slider inwards. I've also added a bit more contrast in the midtone areas with a curve, which I have controlled with restraining points to prevent the contrast spreading to shadow and highlight areas.

My final act was to crop the image to remove the excess space around the areas of interest, so the eye can concentrate more readily on the subjects. It just makes the composition a bit tighter and gives the viewer fewer options regarding where to look first.

It's a lovely picture, though, Bidyut, and such a great angle from which to shoot.



Grasses Tatiana Brailovskaya

Sony Alpha 330, 50mm, 15secs at f/1.8, ISO 3200

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

WHAT a wonderful atmospheric picture this is. I just love the way the grass heads stand out against the spotlit background, and the sidelighting that catches the lone head shooting out to the right. Technically, the focus is in the wrong place as it should be picking out the closer heads rather than those in the middle, but the softness somehow adds to the serenity.

The only distraction for me is those bright circles of out-of-focus highlight, as these draw my eye away from where it should be looking. To correct this, I've simply cropped the picture to produce a square – making it more compact, easier to



look round in one go, and with a more direct message about the lighting up of those heads. It's a delightful picture and my choice for picture of the week.

Edited



APTestbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's **equipment tests**, **reader questions** and **technique pointers**

Honl Photo Traveller 16 portable softbox Around £120

www.honlphoto.com

HONL Photo's Traveller 16 is a large softbox that is designed to fit Speedlite-type flashguns and to be used off-camera either handheld or mounted on a stand. The Traveller 16 has a 16in front diffuser and, while Honl also produces an 8in version, the greater distance between the flash and the diffuser on the Traveller 16 gives softer shadows and more even illumination. It is easy and quick to assemble, folds flat to around 8in² and could live permanently in a camera bag with ease. The softbox attaches to the flashgun via an adjustable Velcro strap, while its tough construction of thick Cordura-style material and heavy-duty stitching on the fittings and seams gives the impression it could last a lifetime.

There is a built-in tension cord to keep the softbox level and in line with the flash head when stand-mounted. However, I found the weight of the softbox (15oz/430g) put a lot of pressure on the angle adjustment and hotshoe fitting of my flashgun, which runs the risk of damage.

The round shape of the front diffuser gives a very pleasing highlight in the eyes, and the option for handheld use makes the softbox very versatile. This is ideal for location portraits and wedding photography, although its size and weight call for careful handling.

Andrew Sydenham



**Amateur
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Photobox Wall Calendar From £16.99

www.photobox.co.uk

PHOTOBOX provides a simple way of creating a range of personalised photo products, including books, cards, canvases, prints and calendars. On test here is the wall calendar. The interface of the site is easy to navigate and quick to use. Once images are uploaded (only JPEGs are accepted), the files are dragged into the picture box, which can then be reshaped and positioned. Basic edits can be performed on the chosen image and several picture boxes can be used on the same page, each with text boxes. Having experimented with different layouts, I prefer a single picture on each page.

Once images are uploaded to the site, it takes less than an hour to create a calendar, depending on how many images and how much editing takes place. There are several background templates, but I opted for the slick 'photographic black' option. The quality of printing and the heavy weight of paper create a pleasing product. The wall calendar is available in A4 (£16.99) and A3 (£18.49), and is a great option to show off your photos and give a personalised gift. **Tim Coleman**



FORTHCOMING TESTS In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Sony Alpha 65

With the same 24.3-million-pixel sensor as the Alpha 77 but £300 cheaper, the Alpha 65 could be the ultimate mid-range camera.

AP 11 February

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 4 Beta

We take a look at the first version of Adobe's latest raw-edging software.

AP 18 February

Canon Pixma Pro-1

This 12-ink, A3+ printer is Canon's new flagship model for professional photographers.

AP 18 February

Nikon D4

With a new 16.2-million-pixel, full-frame sensor, Nikon's new professional DSLR may be the best yet.

AP 25 February

OnOne Perfect Photo Suite 6

This software suite of image-editing tools works as a plug-in for Lightroom, Aperture and Photoshop or as a standalone product.

AP 3 March



AP guide to... Camera care

As a photographer, it is vital that you take proper care of your camera kit. **Tim Coleman** explains how to avoid damage and maintain your equipment to keep it in tip-top condition

MOST modern cameras are very well made and durable enough to stand up to plenty of rigorous use. However, just because they are durable does not mean they are bulletproof. If you want faultless images and kit that holds its value, you need to maintain it well. As soon as factors such as dust, dirt, moisture and shock come into play, the camera is at risk of damage.

For film photography, having kit that is free of dirt and moisture is essential as any marks present on the lens during exposure will consequently appear on the film – and these are permanent. In digital photography these errors can be rectified post-capture using software, but keeping things clean means less time chained to the computer.

Avoiding damage to kit not only ensures that it holds its value, but it also prolongs its life and reduces the risk of costly repair work. If your kit does get dirty, then the problem is more easily rectified if you see to it quickly. For example, moisture on a lens can develop into fungus, and although the first stages of infestation are simple to deal with, leave things too late and you'll be making a visit to the repair shop.

Just as you would with your car, making regular checks is good practice. There may

be nothing wrong, but then there may be an issue that is not immediately obvious without such checks. Over the following pages I will be looking at the best ways to avoid damage in the first instance, and then how to maintain the camera body and lens should they become dirty, marked or damaged.

AVOIDING DAMAGE

Obviously, it is easier to avoid damage than it is to repair it. Unfortunately, some of the most spectacular places to photograph, such as beaches, rivers, streams and mountains, are areas where dust, dirt and water are most prominent. So if you are going to these 'danger zones', remember to protect your kit as you scramble over rocks or crouch down on the sand for that amazing photograph. Also, make sure you protect your gear when shooting in adverse weather conditions, such as in extreme cold or rain. Both the camera body and lens are equally important, so take care of both.

PROTECTING THE CAMERA

Dust and moisture get everywhere, so ensure these do not enter the camera by keeping any holes and joins closed. The rubber seals for ports should always be

closed when not in use, and check for dust and dirt before connecting any cables.

It seems obvious, but don't force in a card that is resisting. This can damage the pins in the camera and fixing them costs around £120. Look out for damage to the holes in a CompactFlash (CF) card, which can in turn damage the pins. Loosely carrying cards in a pocket is not a good idea; SD cards can split in half, while fluff can find its way into the holes of a CF card. Instead, store them in the supplied case or in a bag.

Now we come to that heart-stopping moment – dropping the camera. This is likely to happen at some point if you are not careful, so keep the camera on a shoulder strap, hip holster or in a bag when not in use. Although it may not feel all that comfortable, reducing the length of the strap means the camera is less likely to swing away from your body and hit a fence you are climbing over, or worse, smack your subject on the head as you reach over to fix his or her hair. A holster is an even better option because the camera does not swing at all.

A few general practices may seem obvious, but are always good to remember. For instance, check periodically that the camera straps are secure, as the fastening can become loose over time. When using a tripod, always test that the tripod screw and plate are securely fixed, and that the lock on the head is tight before letting go of the camera. When putting camera kit away in a bag, always make sure

Be extra careful in 'danger zones', such as on a sandy beach

 the pockets are zipped up before lugging it onto your shoulders, otherwise you are likely to hear the thud of expensive kit hitting the ground.

BEATING THE WEATHER

Waterproof covers (also known as camera sleeves) protect the camera and lens barrel from dust and water, so are ideal for rainy weather. Disposable versions are cheapest (from £7.96 for a pack of three), but more expensive and durable versions are available from £16.96. Of course, you can easily make your own using a carrier bag. Pierce a hole in the bottom of the bag through which you can place the front of the lens and then fix it to the lens barrel using a rubber band. A clear plastic bag will ensure that the camera's controls remain visible.

LCD PROTECTION

Scratches and dirt will affect the clarity and quality of an LCD screen. This is a problem when focusing and viewing exposures, especially in bright daylight. A plastic cover comes with Nikon cameras, and it is a good idea to keep it attached. If your camera does not have one, then covers can be bought separately from £8.20. A more expensive alternative is a glass protector (from

This plastic LCD cover is an affordable option and uses an adhesive for a secure fix



Keeping the length of the strap short reduces the risk of the camera swinging around and hitting hard surfaces

TOP TIPS

Check your household and holiday insurance to find what items are covered and where they are covered. Consider separate specialist insurance for camera kit that is not included

A sensor clean is a skilled job and should be completed with extra care

To stop moisture building up, avoid a rapid change between hot and cold environments. Do not pack kit away before it is dry



Plastic covers keep out both water and dust

£20.50), which often includes a viewfinder cover, while a cheaper option is a protective film (from £2.95).

HOW TO AVOID DUST ON THE SENSOR

When changing a lens, the inside of the camera – and the sensor in particular – can pick up dirt. The sensor in a compact system camera is particularly exposed. The best way to avoid trouble is to make this change as quickly as possible while protecting the camera from the elements. Face the body downwards when mounting the new optic so that dust does not settle in the cavity behind the lens. The charge in a camera creates static that attracts dust, so turn the camera off during a lens change.

Many interchangeable-lens cameras offer a sensor-cleaning function. This works by

vibrating the sensor to dislodge any settled dust and dirt, and can be activated manually via the camera menu, or in some models on start-up and/or shut-down. Barry Edmonds of Fixation (www.fixationuk.com) says that a dirty sensor is the most common reason for a camera to be taken to the repair shop. If you clean the sensor yourself, it is unwise to do so when out in the field, so do it before you embark on your photo shoot. First check for dust and dirt on the sensor – it will be most noticeable on a solid background like a piece of white paper, or if you are out and about, the sky. Using a wider aperture will soften the edges of the dirt and make it less obvious. However, if you intend to shoot landscapes with a more narrow aperture of, say, f/11 or smaller, then it is doubly important to check the sensor prior to setting out.

CLEANING YOUR SENSOR

MOST of us have at some point looked over a digital image on the computer and noticed out-of-focus blobs and squiggles that are constant even once the lens has been cleaned. These marks are most obvious in the sky of a landscape and are caused by dust and dirt on the camera sensor's filter/cover. This surface of the sensor is fragile and susceptible to damage, even more than the glass of a lens. To clean the sensor, first make sure the battery is charged or plug the camera into a mains supply. Set the camera to its mirror-up (sensor-cleaning) mode (step 1) – see your camera's manual for instructions on how to do this.

There are two types of cleaning: dry and wet. A dry clean is for loose items, and a squeeze blower should be sufficient (step 2). Air canisters are too powerful for use on the sensor and the liquid propellant can leave gunk behind. Peter Brogden of Camera Clean recommends the Silicon Jumbo Blower (£6.95 – see below right). Peter says he has seen sensors scratched by the hard end of a blower, but this version has a soft silicone end. When not in use, store the blower in a clear bag, otherwise it may suck up dust and consequently blow this out when used.

If the dirt is hanging on doggedly, it will require a wet clean. For this you need the correct cleaning solution. Eclipse lens and sensor cleaner (£11.95) is a pure and refined methanol that evaporates quickly, leaving no residue. Apply a couple of drops of the solution (step 3) onto a sensor swab (from £20.95 for a pack of four), and gently but firmly stroke it in a single motion over the sensor (step 4).

After completing this process, check that the sensor is fully clean by mounting a lens and setting its aperture to around f/11. Now fill the frame with a white card and overexpose by 2EV to get a bright white result. Examine the image at 100% on a computer screen, keeping an eye out for the blobs and squiggles that indicate dust and dirt. This is a good thing to do before a clean, too, as it will show you exactly where the dust is located.



STARTER KIT

Silicone Jumbo Blower £6.95

PecPad 10x10cm (100 pack) £11.50

Microfibre lens cloth (179x250mm) £2.56

Eclipse CCD cleaner (59ml bottle) £11.95

Sensor swabs from £20.95

Lens brush (lipstick-style) £4.25

PROTECTING THE LENS

Lenses are perhaps at their most vulnerable to damage when they are being taken off or mounted on a camera body. For instance, when swapping lenses, there is always the possibility that one could be dropped and broken. Dirt and dust ingress is also more likely, so to guard against this make sure the lens body cap and lens cap are close to hand so they can be fixed in place quickly.

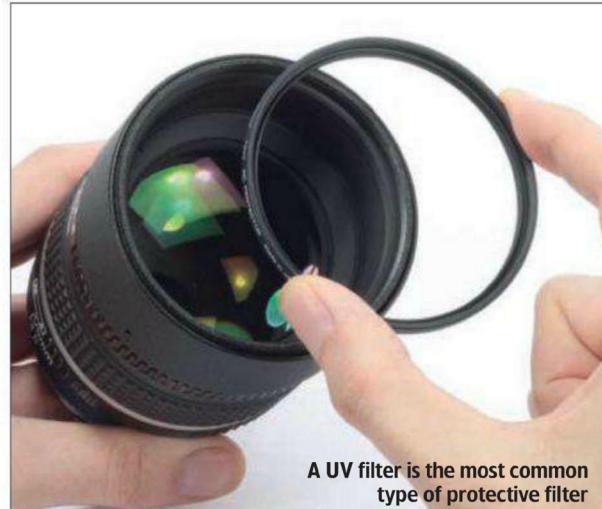
Avoid touching the lens element directly as skin contact will leave oily fingermarks on the glass. Attaching the lens cap when the camera is not in use is obviously good practice, so be sure to keep it to hand. There are devices available that fix the cap to the lens itself (from £1.99), while some shoulder straps offer handy compartments to store one in.

THE FRONT ELEMENT

A lens hood will reduce the amount of dust and water landing on the front element, but only a protective filter will completely stop this from happening.

The lens quality should be matched by the quality of filter, so it is worth buying a premium filter if the lens is good. Alternatively, to ensure the best image quality, remove the filter when the camera is ready for an exposure and replace it again between shots. Most importantly, a filter will take the brunt of any impact should the camera be dropped, and it is much cheaper to replace than a lens. Another option is a rubber lens guard (from £19.95), which slots over the outside of the lens and absorbs the knocks.

Add plastic bags to your camera bag in case any kit needs storing



A UV filter is the most common type of protective filter

LENS CARE

WHEN carrying out a minor clean, it is tempting to be lazy and take short cuts, be it using your mouth to blow dirt away or the sleeve of a jumper or a tissue to wipe dirt off. Take the time to use the right tools. Removing dust from a lens, for example, should always be done using a blower, soft brush or microfibre cloth. For such a clean, be careful when removing dirt or sand as this can scratch the lens surface when rubbed. Microfibre lifts dirt from the surface much more effectively than a regular cloth and a gentle flick should remove any debris. For dust that takes more persuasion, a circular motion is ideal.

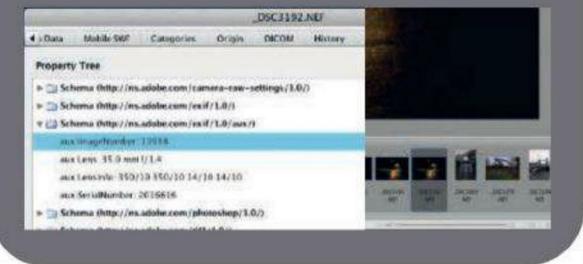
For more stubborn dirt, a cleaning solution may be necessary, together with the correct type of wipe. Solutions start from £1.82 for a 6ml dropper bottle.



SHUTTER ACTUATIONS

KNOWING how many shutter actuations a camera has clocked up is good information to have, especially if you are selling or buying a second-hand model. If the shutter is near the end of its life, it is a costly replacement to make. Professional models offer 100,000+ shutter actuations, while more budget models usually offer fewer than 100,000.

You can use Adobe Bridge to display this shutter actuation information by highlighting the file of the latest image and selecting File>File Info. Scroll the tab to Advanced and click on the Schema folder labelled 'exif/aux'. Alternatively, visit www.myshuttercount.com and upload the most recent image taken with the camera. The shutter actuation and Exif data will be displayed immediately.



away from the elements or to use as a makeshift rain sleeve.

DUST IN LENSES

If dust does get inside the lens, don't be too concerned. Dust particles get everywhere and trombone or extending zoom lenses are particularly susceptible because they suck in air and dust during the zoom motion. The best way to check for dust is by removing the lens from the camera, opening the aperture and shining a torch up through the rear element. A large amount of dust can reduce image contrast and introduce flare. Extremely large bits that are millimetres in size, such as loose particles that have broken off due to an impact or from general wear and tear, will show up in an image. In this case, it is best to take the lens to a repair shop.

STORAGE

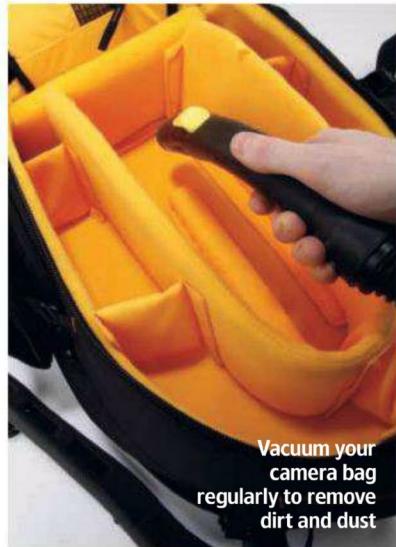
A key part of kit care is storing it correctly, but even when it is tucked safely away, camera equipment can be at risk from dust, dirt and moisture.

Always use a good camera bag and lens pouches. Most have individual compartments to provide a snug fit and padding to prevent any damage from impact and knocks. However, over time the bag itself will pick up dirt, so periodically give it a good clean. First, remove the inserts and check the corners and crevices for any lost small accessories, then use a vacuum cleaner to remove dirt, followed by tape to pry away any stubborn bits of fluff.

Virtually all bags come with at least one silica gel pack. These are designed to soak up any moisture and keep the inside dry. A silica gel pack can only absorb so much moisture, though, so look out for types that change colour to indicate whether they are wet or dry. Packs can easily be dried on a radiator. For extras, try www.7dayshop.com where a pack of ten costs from £2.49.

The best way to stop moisture forming in the camera and lenses is to keep them at a constant temperature. Avoid sudden changes between hot and cold environments, and prolonged exposure to light or cold. When returning from a cold winter's shoot, stagger the change of temperature. For instance, initially keep your camera in a colder room in the house before sitting by a cosy fire looking over the day's images. When the camera is not in use, place it in a bag or container, but make sure your kit is dry before storing it away.

A sealed Ziploc-type bag with silica gel packets inside is a great way to remove moisture build-up



Vacuum your camera bag regularly to remove dirt and dust

A common issue for film SLRs is that the foam in the joins and back door can deteriorate over time, leading to light spills. If it has been a while since the camera has been used, a visual inspection is sufficient to see if a replacement is needed.

MOISTURE AND FUNGUS

There are times when it is not possible to keep camera gear free of moisture, and certain types of damage can be dealt with yourself (see image below). In extreme cases, though, where the moisture has led to the growth of mould or fungus (or where obstructive particles are inside the lens), it may be necessary to take the camera apart to clean the affected area. However, this is a highly skilled job that most of us should leave to a professional – in unskilled hands it is more than likely that the lens will end up in a worse state than before (for more information see *Professor Newman explains... lens fungus* in AP 21 May 2011). A basic lens service costs from £80, but can be considerably more depending on the damage, so think about whether the value of the lens makes a repair cost-effective. **AP**

All prices listed in this article are from www.cameraclean.co.uk (tel: 01793 855 663) unless otherwise stated. Thanks to Peter Brogden from Camera Clean and Barry Edmonds of Fixation (www.fixationuk.com tel: 0207 582 3294) for their help on this article



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**STREET
PRICE**
Around
£1,400



Reflecta MidformatScan MF5000

With medium format still offering higher resolutions than most DSLRs, there remains a need for negative scanners.

Mat Gallagher looks at Reflecta's solution for 120 film

IN THE early days of digital imaging, there seemed to be no end of options for turning film into a digital format. However, these options seem to be drying up – presumably because those who want digital images tend to shoot with digital cameras, while those still shooting film would rather stick to traditional methods for printing. While 35mm negative scanners can be picked up relatively cheaply, those designed for larger formats remain pricy or impossible to find. The stalwart models of medium-format scanning were the Nikon Super Coolscan 9000 and the Minolta Dimage Scan Multi Pro. However, neither is still on general sale and even used models will set you back at least £2,500. The

Reflecta MidformatScan MF5000 is one of the few remaining fully dedicated scanners, and while it has an RRP of £2,250 it can be found online for around £1,400. A cheaper alternative is to use a high-end flatbed scanner, but the results from these models aren't always as impressive as those from dedicated devices.

FILM HOLDER

The MF5000 features film holders for 35mm negatives, mounted slides and a range of medium-format frames up to 6x12cm. There is a large cartridge for 120 film that fits in the front of the scanner, allowing one frame at a time to be scanned, while 35mm film is placed in a strip holder

and fed into the side of the scanner. As the 120-film holder is just 130mm (just over 5in), it is necessary to trim the negs into single or two-frame strips. The holder secures the negatives with two clips that snap into place, with adjustment available on one side to pull the negs tight and avoid curvature. This is more effective than those holders found on most flatbed scanners, but quite fiddly to place the negatives into. Without the use of cotton gloves you quickly cover your negs in fingerprints and the clips can be difficult to undo again. The 35mm strip holder is sturdy and practical, ensuring negatives stay perfectly flat, as is the case with the mounted slide holder.

SOFTWARE

The scanner comes complete with CyberViewX scanning software for both Mac and PC use, along with a copy of Adobe Photoshop Elements 9 with which to edit your images. The software installs quickly and easily, and can be updated to the latest version via the Reflecta website. When the scanner is powered up it takes 40-60secs to initialise and ready itself before being able to scan. The software is simple and looks fairly rudimentary when compared with recent Epson or Canon layouts, but it offers all the required functions.

The size of negative is chosen before a pre-scan, which offers a choice of either a quick 320ppi or a more detailed 640ppi display. Once the image is previewed, the framing can be easily adjusted to the position of the negative, and the image flipped or rotated as required. Occasionally, the selected frame snaps back into its original position, so careful adjustment is needed during fine-tuning. Before making the final scan, there are options to set the resolution between 320ppi and 3200ppi, and a choice of 8 or 16-bit colour depth. The file can then be saved to a chosen destination in either JPEG (8-bit only) or TIFF, with a custom file name and series number.

Further settings are available from the preferences menu and are chosen separately for black & white, positive and negative. The options provide default settings for resolution and quality, but also settings for noise reduction, exposure, contrast, white balance, auto colour and Magic Touch – a dust and scratch-removal process that uses an infrared sensor during scanning to detect particles and scratches.

SCAN TIMES

For 6x7cm negatives scanning times are relatively fast, being 5mins 40secs for a high-quality 3200ppi scan in 16-bit TIFF format from an Apple Mac Pro computer with Magic Touch applied, and just 1min 30secs for a 1000ppi scan in 8-bit JPEG with no Magic Touch. However, when using an older PC scan times are much longer, being up to 14mins, with the added time due to data processing.

During scanning it is best to avoid running any other programs, as clicking off the scan dialogue can cause the scan to fail. This

DATA FILE

RRP

£2,250

Type

Film

Media

Negative and positive as strips (35mm) or slides (5x5cm), 6x4.5cm, 6x6cm, 6x7cm, 6x8cm, 6x9cm, 6x12cm

Resolution

3200 dpi

Colour depth

48-bit

Contrast

>3.6 Dmax

Requirements (PC)

Windows XP, Vista (32 and 64-bit) and Windows 7 (32 and 64-bit)

Requirements (Mac)

Mac OS X 10.4 or higher

Scanning area

24.3x36.5mm/
118x56.9mm

Connectivity

USB 2.0

Size

320x165x160mm

Weight

5.6kg



Above: The Epson flatbed produces a higher contrast and warmer image than the Reflecta scanner



Right: The flat tone from the Reflecta scanner allows the maximum amount of detail

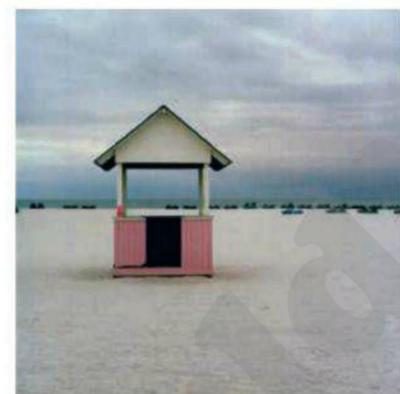
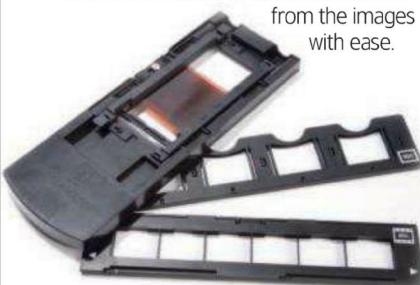
'The scanner produces images of impressive quality. At a 3200ppi resolution it captures all the detail from the negative'

is presumably due to the large amount of memory used when scanning. File sizes for a 16-bit TIFF file can exceed 300MB at 3200ppi, and therefore require a large amount of processing power.

IMAGE QUALITY

The scanner produces images of impressive quality, and at a 3200ppi resolution it captures all the detail available from the negative. The auto colour and exposure settings give a fairly flat-toned image to maintain maximum detail, which will be preferable for most users, although at times the white balance appears very cool and images look a little washed-out. However, adjustments can be made to the colour, brightness and levels before performing the full scan, with before and after displays in the palettes. The noise-reduction option appears to produce some strange patterns in areas of fine detail, but the Magic Touch removes all traces of dust and scratches

from the images with ease.



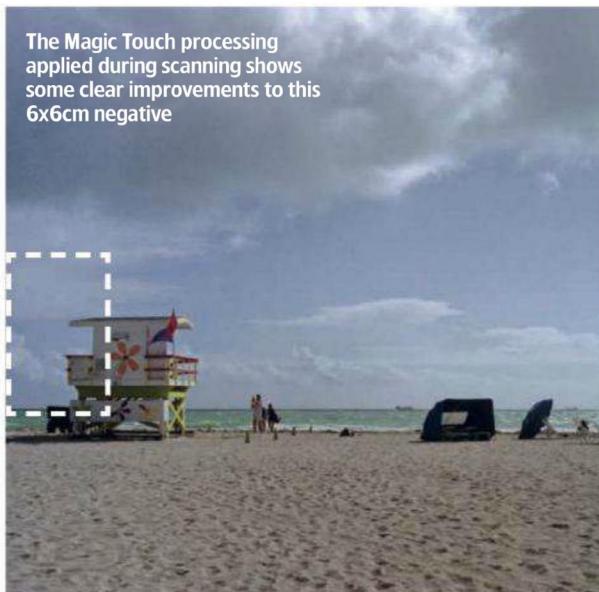
COMPETITION

To compare the benefits of the Reflecta MF5000 against a flatbed model, I scanned the same negatives using the Epson Perfection 4990 Photo. This flatbed scanner costs a lot less than the Reflecta unit – the newer Perfection V600 Photo costs around £240 – and offers a higher scanning resolution of up to 12,800ppi.

To enable the images to be compared fairly, I scanned the negatives at a matching 3200ppi and at 4800ppi resolution. While the autoexposure control on the Epson produced richer and higher-contrast images, the 3.6 Dmax optical density of the Reflecta MF5000 is higher than the 3.4 from the Epson, allowing a greater tonal range. With dust and scratch processing (in the form of Digital ICE) applied, scan times were noticeably slower from the Epson model, although it is possible to batch scan up to six frames as the holder is larger. The downside is that the film holder is flimsier and doesn't hold the negatives flat in the same way as the Reflecta unit, and this can cause some areas of the frame to fall out of focus. **AP**

Reflecta GmbH, Junghansring 70, 72108 Rottenburg, Germany. Tel: +49 7457 946 560. <https://reflecta.de/en>. Distributed by Kenro, Greenbridge Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 3LH. Tel: 01793 615 836. www.kenro.co.uk

The Magic Touch processing applied during scanning shows some clear improvements to this 6x6cm negative



Straight scan



With Magic Touch



Verdict

SHOOTING 35mm film for digital use is becoming a rare occurrence, but medium-format film still has its benefits, including a potentially higher resolution than many DSLRs. With this in mind, it seems a shame there are not more dedicated medium-format scanners available, although Plustek has just announced a 120-film scanner at the Consumer Electronics Show in the USA. The Reflecta MidformatScan MF5000 is capable of high-quality scanning, and if you require a large number of frames to be scanned – and have the time and patience – it can still be a more cost-effective option than drum scanning. The problem lies not so much in the potential quality of such devices, but the fact that equivalent results can now be achieved from much cheaper flatbed devices. For most users, the results from a high-end flatbed unit will be more than sufficient – particularly if you can avoid using the holders that are provided. The reason for the demise of the Minolta and Nikon medium-format scanners is perhaps as much due to this as to any lack of demand for medium-format scanning. The Reflecta MidformatScan MF5000 is an impressive unit, but its appeal is likely to be limited.

**Amateur
Photographer**
★★★★★

Ask AP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries

FLASH COMPATIBILITY

Q I have a Jessops 300 TTL flashgun that I bought many years ago. I planned to sell it on eBay, but have found that it works perfectly. I would not get much for the flashgun, so I am considering using it as a secondary flash with a wireless trigger and my Nikon Speedlight SB-900.

Obviously the SB-900 does not need a wireless trigger, but I don't really want to connect the Jessops gun to my Nikon D90 camera directly in case I fry the electronics. But then again, could the Jessops flash fry a remote trigger, too?

Any suggestions as to what triggers I could buy without taking out another mortgage would be very welcome. **Steve Gardner**

A The Jessops 300 TTL flashgun is an old model, but I'm not sure it's so old that trigger voltages will be a problem. There is little on the internet about this flashgun, though, so I can't give you a definitive answer without testing the gun myself. You can find out the trigger voltage of any flashgun with a sensitive multimeter. Set it to read DC voltage and try the 100V scale first to ensure you don't cause damage. Place one probe on the main contact and the other on the metal contacts on the hotshoe's side. Now switch it on and watch the value on the gun rise to a final figure – this is the trigger voltage of the gun. Your Nikon D90 is specified up to 12V, although in theory 24V should be accepted.

Basic slave flash triggers are fairly crude things, being triggered by a flash of light and then firing an attached flash.

Such electronics are not as sensitive to high trigger voltages as, for example, Pocket Wizard triggers that retain TTL flash metering when off camera. Look for something like Hama's 6967 flash slave, available at for around £15 (www.7dayshop.com).

If you conclude that you can use the Jessops gun on your Nikon D90, you can also use it to trigger the SB-900 (pictured above) off-camera. You'll have to set the Nikon gun to SU-4 mode, which disables all the fancy TTL stuff and lets the flashgun fire on the flash it sees from the Jessops unit. You can do this when working with both guns off-camera, too, firing them with the internal flash, which you'll need to set to manual mode, not commander. **Ian Farrell**



ASK...

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply email your questions to: apanswers@ipcm.com, via [twitter](http://twitter.com/ap_answers) or by post to: **Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

Q I have recently retired and would like to take up digital photography as a hobby. While I understand the principles of photography, there are several terms that baffle me, such as focal length, flash control, raw and JPEG. Can you recommend a suitable beginner's book that I could refer to when struggling?

I would like a DSLR as opposed to a compact system camera and have narrowed my choice down to a Nikon D90 or a Canon EOS 550D. I will be shooting a wide range of subjects, from landscapes to sports and action, so which would you consider the best?

David Powell

A Although I'm modest in nature, David, I'm not modest enough to resist mentioning that I've just written a book that covers all this and more. It's called *The Complete Guide to Digital Photography* (ISBN 978-0-85738-548-2) and is available in all good bookshops.

I can clarify briefly the terms you mention, but for more detail you'll need to get a book on photography, or perhaps subscribe to AP.

Focal length is defined as the distance from the optical centre of the lens to the point of focus on the camera's sensor. What we really mean is that focal length tells us how much a subject will be magnified. On most DSLRs a figure of around 30mm gives the same

perspective as the human eye. More than this is a telephoto lens, which brings objects closer, while less is known as wideangle and means you can get more in the frame.

Flash control is the (largely automatic) method by which a camera controls how much light is put out by a flash. Too much and the picture will be too bright, while too little and it will be too dark. These days this is done with pre-flashes, which are weak flashes put out before the main exposure to let the camera meter the scene and decide how much light is needed to get good results.

JPEG and raw are the two main file formats that digital cameras are capable of producing. JPEG files are smaller in size (so you get more on a card) and can be viewed by anyone straight out of the camera. Raw files are slightly better in quality and can give more options for editing if you are doing this on a PC. Most cameras let you shoot both at once.

The Canon EOS 550D and Nikon D90 were both excellent cameras in their day, but are now coming to the end of their current production cycles. Canon replaced the EOS 550D with the EOS 600D some time ago, and something like the Nikon D5100 might provide you with better performance than the D90, especially in low light when you can raise the camera's ISO sensitivity to shoot handheld without flash. Don't discount other brands, either, such as Pentax's K-5 and Sony's Alpha 55. If it were me, I think I'd choose the Nikon, but it's a close-run thing and there is an element of personal taste. I suggest going to a decent independent camera dealer and trying these models out side by side. **Ian Farrell**

THE EYES HAVE IT

Q When I use flash to photograph my dogs, their eyes often look bluey-green. My cameras are set for redeye reduction and I can make further corrections on my computer, but they have no effect on dogs' eyes. Do you have any suggestions as to what I can do? **Phil Ruler**

f/AQ

Should you upgrade your DSLR?

Part of the advantage of DSLR photography is that you are buying into a system that can be upgraded, as new camera bodies, extra lenses and other accessories can be added to expand your photographic horizons. Yet deciding which direction to take can be a difficult process, especially with the extraordinary marketing efforts of the major camera manufacturers pulling you in every direction.

If the time to upgrade has arrived, the first question to ask yourself is,

FROM THE AP FORUM

Storing images while abroad

Rivergord asks I am going to South Africa for three weeks and will be taking a lot of photographs. I have a few memory cards, but should I continue shooting in raw or should I shoot in JPEG to get more images per card? I might take a laptop as well that I can download to.

P_Stoddart replies Does your laptop have a DVD burner built in or do you have a USB external drive? If so, then use the laptop and back up to DVD+R as you go. Raw files give you the greatest control. If, say, the exposure is off on a shot, you stand a better chance of correcting it. Personally, if I were going to take the time out for such a

trip, I would buy some more memory cards.

Bob_maddison replies Don't take a laptop to South Africa if you only plan to use it to back up your photo files. Laptops can be a nuisance when flying and are a security risk when you're in South Africa. Why not shoot raw and JPEG. At the end of each day you can decide which to keep. I have visited South Africa several times and it is tempting to shoot a lot of photos. However, many of these will not be masterpieces but your personal record of your visit. For that purpose, a good JPEG should be adequate, although some might disagree with me!

Large_format replies No question about it: shoot raw. I went to South America three years ago and while I took plenty of memory cards, most people on the trip didn't. Every town had several shops that would transfer the contents of a card onto DVD. I expect South Africa will have similar facilities. As a precaution, I'd always check that the transfer has been successful before re-formatting my card and get duplicate DVDs made.



Flash causes a dog's eyes to turn bluey-green (left) and the corrected image (right)

and then reduce the colour saturation of this area with an adjustment. You may want to play with brightness and contrast until the pupil looks realistic. **Ian Farrell**

'Why do I need to upgrade?' What is it that your old camera is not doing that you want the new one to do? What do you want to achieve by shelling out more cash on more kit? Many of the features of new cameras are not worth the cost of an upgrade (a screen that is 1/2in larger than the last one, for instance), but others certainly are. You might want to take pictures in low light without flash, so you would benefit from a DSLR with improved performance at high ISO settings. Or maybe you've developed an interest for sports photography, in which case opting for something with more AF points and a faster continuous shooting speed may help. It's important to establish the features you want in order to know the direction in which to move.

Also, allocate some money in your budget for any necessary software upgrades you'll need, such as Adobe Photoshop to read the raw files from your new camera.

One reason that many photographers

cite for upgrading is that they 'just want a bit more image quality', but it's here that the controversy starts. Yes, more pixels means more resolution and bigger file sizes, but sometimes upgrading your lens will give a much larger boost in performance than going from 12 million pixels to 16 million pixels. For example, if you have a 15.1-million-pixel Canon EOS 50D with a standard 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens, I'll bet that buying the excellent Canon EF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 IS USM lens will give you more of a lift in sharpness and resolution than upgrading to the most recent 18-million-pixel EOS 60D.

There are other upgrades to your system that can come about through accessories, too. Why not consider a vertical shooting grip and extra battery to improve handling and battery life? Or buy an ultra wideangle or telephoto lens to supplement what you already have, instead of replacing it?

Ian Farrell

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Tim Coleman explains how to get the most out of your camera when shooting in low-light conditions

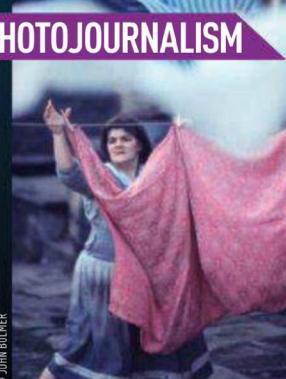
AP GUIDE



WINDOW-LIGHT PORTRAITS

In the second of our four-part guide to shooting portraits by window light, **Richard Sibley** looks at lens selection and metering

PHOTOJOURNALISM



COLOUR SHIFT

John Bulmer, one of the first photojournalists to shoot in colour, looks at the impact colour had on his work



Nikon SB-910 Speedlight

The Nikon SB-910 Speedlight is an upgraded version of the popular SB-900 flashgun. **Richard Sibley** finds out what the new model has to offer

IN JUNE 2008, Nikon launched the SB-900 Speedlight. As well as being slightly more powerful than its SB-800 predecessor, it also introduced a larger dot-matrix LCD screen. It is this screen, and the updated button arrangement, that make the SB-900 a firm, though expensive, favourite among Nikon users.

At the end of last year Nikon released the SB-910. As the designation suggests, the flashgun is more of an upgrade of the SB-900 than a new flashgun in its own right. As such, the specification of the two flashes is virtually identical. However, there are a few improvements in the newer flash that should improve the quality of what is already a highly regarded unit.

FEATURES

When it comes to choosing a flashgun, power output is at the top of most photographers' lists. With a guide number of 34m @ ISO 100 (in 35mm lens setting), the SB-910 has the same output as its predecessor. While this should be more than enough light for most people's needs, it is quite a bit less than the Nissin Di866 Professional Mark II flash, which has a GN of 40m @ ISO 100 (in 35mm lens setting).

The wireless flash control on the SB-910 is the same as that on SB-900, and it is quite comprehensive. It can be used as either a remote or a master unit, meaning that not only can the flash be triggered from a distance, but it can also be used to control

AT A GLANCE

- GN 34m @ ISO 100
- 360° swivel
- 90° tilt head
- Tungsten and fluorescent colour filters
- Improved screen

the power output of other compatible flashes.

A quick flick of the dial switches the SB-910 from remote to master, making available the wide range of options this mode offers. Not only can the power of other individual flashguns be changed manually, but they can also be individually switched between i-TTL, manual and auto modes, with the option to add flash compensation to any of these settings.

One of the most important improvements in the SB-910 is to the thermal cut-out. This prevents the flash from overheating and burning out. On the SB-900, the cut-out simply prevents the flash from working when it reaches a certain temperature. Many professional photographers found this frustrating, as it meant the flash was inoperable. In the SB-910, the thermal cut-out has been altered so the flash recycle rate slows down, rather than stopping completely. This allows the flash to keep being fired, albeit at a reduced frequency, which should prevent the flash from becoming too hot and therefore damaged. This brings the top-of-the range Nikon Speedlight in line with the lower level SB-700, which also has this feature.

As with most flagship flashguns, the SB-910 comes with a few accessories. The most notable of these is the SW-13H diffusion dome. Many photographers will find this plastic clip-on dome useful, as it softens the flash output and helps to spread light more widely, which is handy when bouncing light off walls or ceilings.

Like the SB-900, the SB-910 also comes with two coloured filters. In the older flash, these colour-correction filters are filter gels that fit onto an attachment that clips in front of the flash head. The newer flash has a neater solution. Rather than flimsy filter gels and a holder, the SB-910 comes with two solid plastic green and orange filters that clip to the flash head in the same way as the diffusion dome. These should correct the colour of the flash light to match fluorescent and tungsten lighting respectively. The filters still allow the diffusion dome to be fitted over the top of them so that, when used in combination, the flash light can be both colour balanced and diffused. This neat solution should prove very popular, particularly among professional wedding photographers.

Beneath the head of the SB-910 is a sensor that reads a small code on the colour-correction filter. This allows the flash to know which coloured filter is attached, and when the camera is in AWB the white balance can be adjusted accordingly.

Also included in the soft case that comes with the flash is a plastic stand. This has a tripod screw thread on the underside to allow the flash to be mounted on a tripod or a lighting stand. Sadly, though, the thread is made of plastic rather than being a metal screw thread. While this will concern only a handful of photographers who regularly use the stand, over time it will be more likely to wear than a metal version. It seems like an odd cost-saving feature on what is otherwise a premium-quality product.

Facts & figures

RRP	£449.99
Guide number	34m @ ISO 100
Flash modes	i-TTL, auto aperture flash, non-TTL auto flash, distance-priority manual flash, manual flash and repeating flash
Wireless	Yes – remote or master
Bounce capability	Tilts from -7° to +90°, horizontally 180°
Power source	Four AA-type batteries
External power	Yes – SD-9 high-performance battery pack
Dimensions	78.5x145x113mm
Weight	420g (without batteries)
Accessories supplied	Speedlight stand AS-21, diffusion dome SW-13H, incandescent filter SZ-2TN, fluorescent filter SZ-2FL, soft case SS-910

Nikon, 380 Richmond Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5PR. Tel: 0330 123 0932. www.nikon.co.uk

BUILD AND HANDLING

As expected for a flashgun costing more than £400, the SB-910 is very well built. The lock for the hotshoe is solid with a reassuring spring, while the head rotates through 360° and tilts 90°. Built into the head is a pull-out wideangle diffuser and plastic bounce card.

The number of features on a flashgun can make it one of the most daunting photographic accessories to use, but thankfully the SB-910 is fairly straightforward and more experienced

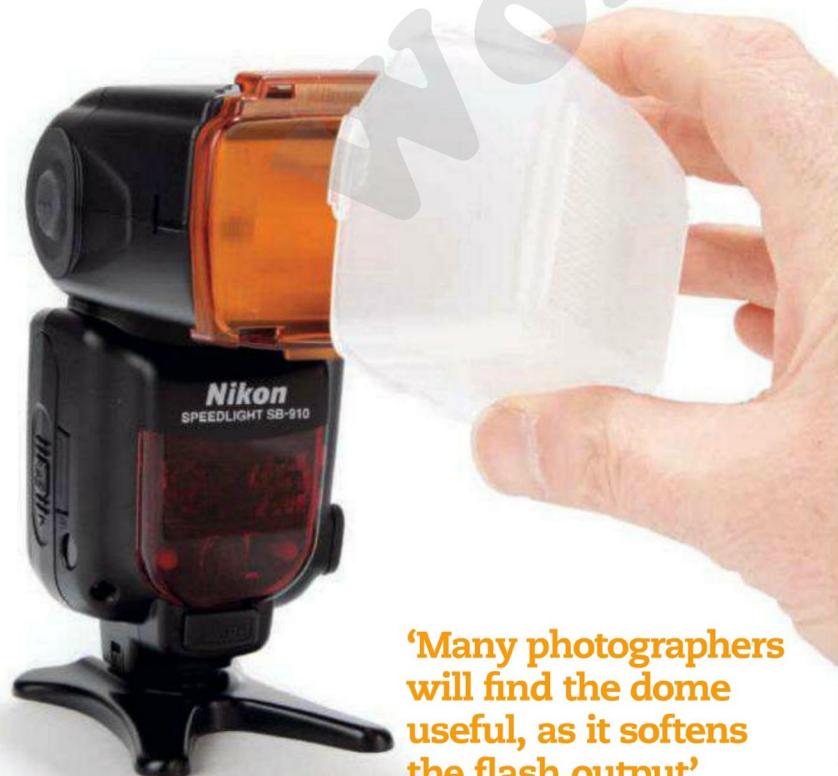
photographers should be able to pick up the flash and use it without first referring to the instructions.

Less experienced photographers will also find the SB-910 simple to use, with the large dot-matrix LCD screen clearly showing all the settings. The screen is an improved version of that found on the SB-900, being brighter and having more contrast. The screen can be illuminated for use in low light, as can the buttons. All these features make it simple to control the flash settings at night.

The controls on the SB-910 are largely

Above: The controls of the SB-910 are straightforward and easy to use

Below left:
Included is a diffuser that can be fitted over the colour filters



'Many photographers will find the dome useful, as it softens the flash output'

the same as those on the SB-900. The only slight difference is that the button previously labelled zoom now accesses the menu, while the manual 'zoom' can be changed using one of the top-row buttons.

PERFORMANCE

One of the first things I was keen to test was the recycling time of the flash. Using four new generic alkaline AA batteries, the SB-910 took around 4.6secs between two full-power flashes. Using the same batteries I was able to shoot at 1/8th power at a frame rate of 6fps for eight shots, with the flash firing on each frame. However, a few of the frames were a fraction darker than the first one.

Using NiMH batteries speeds up the recycle time, and those photographers taking action shots may benefit from using these. Similarly, if you are lighting portrait images with an SB-910 I would recommend NiMH batteries, as the faster recycle time means less waiting around between shots.

The final improvement to the SB-910 over the SB-900 is its AF illumination. Rather than just projecting a red beam of light that can be seen in the centre of the frame, the beam on the SB-910 is projected onto an area of the frame that corresponds to the AF point in use. This works very well in low-light conditions, making sure that the subject is in focus even when off-centre AF points are selected.

When used with Nikon's D300 and D700 DSLRs, I found that the SB-910 produces very good exposures. It is possible to set your camera to aperture priority, put the flash in TTL mode and fire the flash directly or bounced and achieve great results. Flash compensation control is also available, making it easy to fine-tune the flash exposure. **AP**

Verdict

WITH its great combination of power and ease of use, combined with versatile wireless flash capabilities, the Nikon SB-910 Speedlight should be at the top of many Nikon owners' wish lists. Small features, such as the hard plastic correction filters and the backlit buttons, are nice touches, and it is quite hard to find fault with the flash.

Perhaps the biggest issue is the price. The RRP of the SB-910 is £449.99, while the slightly more powerful and similarly specified Nissin Di866 Professional Mark II flash can be found for around £200 (street price). There is also the fact that the SB-910 is only an upgrade from the SB-900, which can currently be found online for around £325.

Unless you are a professional photographer who will take advantage of the SB-910's new thermal cut-out feature, SB-900 owners may find it hard to justify the extra expense. Those looking for a high-quality powerful flashgun for their Nikon DSLR should consider the SB-910, but be aware that if power is all you require there are other, more affordable, options.

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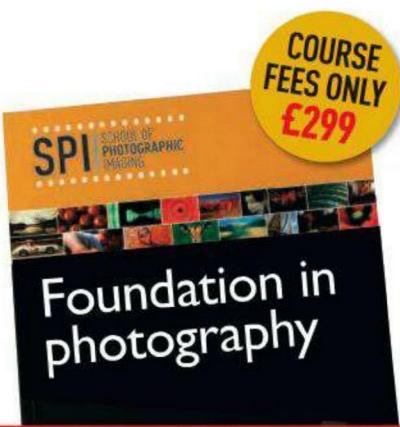
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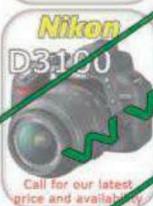
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D90

12.3 megapixels
4.5 fps
720p movie mode



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D90 + 18-105mm VR
★★★★★ 'Most fun I have had with a camera in years' Crispington - Essex



D5100

16.2 megapixels
4.0 fps
1080p movie mode



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D5100 + 18-55mm VR
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12.3 megapixels
7.0 fps
720p movie mode



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D700 Body
★★★★★ 'Terrific Full-Frame DSLR' RichardD300 - North Wales



D3s

12.1 megapixels
9.0 fps
full frame CMOS sensor



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D3s Body
★★★★★ 'Superb Pro-Camera' WorcesterWeddings - Worcester

CUSTOMER REVIEW: D3x Body
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SONY

14.2 megapixels
7.0 fps
1080i movie mode



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A65



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10.0 fps
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A77



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12.0 fps
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14.0 fps
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3.0 fps
1080i movie mode

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E-5



W
MICRO 4/3

12.3 megapixels
3.0 fps
1080i movie mode



E-5 Body

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16.3 megapixels
7.0 fps
1080p movie mode

K-5

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: 1100D + 18-55mm II
 5 stars 'Great for a novice looking to improve'
 Liz - South West



EOS 600D

18.0 megapixels
3.7 ips
1080p movie mode

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18.0 megapixels
3.7 ips
1080p movie mode

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18.0 megapixels
5.3 ips
1080p movie mode

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: 7D Body
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EF 50mm f1.2 L USM	£1268
EF 50mm f1.4 USM	£285
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MP-E 65mm f2.8 1-5x Macro	£844
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TS-E 90mm f2.8	£1144.95
EF 100mm f2.8 USM Macro	£429
EF 100mm f2.8 L IS USM Macro	£709
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EF 300mm f2.8 L USM II	£5549
EF 300mm f4.0 L IS USM	£1143.95
EF 400mm f2.8 L USM II	£8869
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EF 600mm f4.0 L IS USM II	£10099
EF 800mm f5.6 L USM	£9794
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EF-S 10-22mm f3.5-4.5 USM	£639
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EF 17-40mm f4.0 L USM	£613
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EF-S 17-85mm f4.0-5.6 L USM	£369
EF-S 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 L IS II	£159
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EF-S 18-200mm f3.5-5.6 L	£403.95
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NEW! 12-24mm f4.5-5.6 EX DG HSM II	£679
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70-300mm f4.0-5.6 APO Macro Super DG	£177.99
70-300mm f4.0-5.6 DL Macro Super DG	£126.99
120-400mm f4.5-5.6 APO OS HSM	£759
150-500mm f5.0-6.3 DC OS HSM	£849
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HX100V Black	
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Nikon

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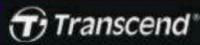
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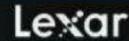
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2GB	£9.99

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CAMERA BAGS



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As one of the UK's leading ThinkTank stockists, we aim to carry the entire range in stock at all times. If you're unsure as to exactly which bag you need, or simply wish to examine the superior quality of the ThinkTank range, why not visit our showroom in Leamington Spa. We will also match or beat any ThinkTank price for any other UK stockist.

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Billingham's exquisite range of hand-made camera bags are now on display in our recently-extended showroom in Leamington Spa. If you are considering investing in a professional camera bag that will protect your equipment for many years to come, we strongly recommend first-hand inspection of the Billingham range - only then can Billingham's preoccupation with excellence and attention to detail be fully appreciated.

The Hadley Pro

Based on the Hadley Original, the Hadley Pro features a number of additional features, including a carrying handle and waterproof zippered back pocket. Available in Khaki & Tan, Sage & Tan, Black & Tan, and Black & Black.

The Hadley Pro £149.99

More Billingham Bags

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Tripod Straps £15.99

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A firm favourite with serious photographers the world over, the 5 Series' range comprises four sizes of bag, available in Khaki & Tan, Black & Tan, or Black & Black.

Billingham 225 £229.99
Billingham 335 £239.99
Billingham 445 £259.99
Billingham 555 £289.99

The 7 Range
New Billingham 7 for 2009, constructed from FibreNyte - a lighter alternative to traditional Canvas. Available in Khaki & Chocolate or Black & Black.

Billingham 107 £229.99
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Kata 3N1-20 £74.99
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Internal Dimensions: 31.5 x 22.0 x 16.0cm

Kata 3N1-30 £84.99
External Dimensions: 45.0 x 32.0 x 19.0cm
Internal Dimensions: 32.5 x 29.5 x 16.0cm

Kata 3N1-33 £119.99
Based in the award-winning 3N1-30, the new 3N1-33 has additional features, the most notable being a 15" laptop compartment. See website for details.

IMPROVED - Kata DPS Digital Rucksack

The Kata DPS Digital Rucksack gives top level protection to two DSLRs with mounted lenses, 3-4 wide personal items. The Kata DPS can be converted from a camera bag to a daypack when not needed by removing the padded bottom camera insert. When used as a camera bag, the main compartment will hold your DSLR in a top grip position while the modular dividers system separates, organises and protects your lenses, flashes and other accessories. There is an included rain cover which folds neatly away, and an ergonomic chest belt and balancing waist strap for maximum comfort while travelling your gear.

DR-465i £59.99 DR-466i £64.99 DR-467i £69.99

DC Shoulder Bags A range of understated, yet surprisingly roomy and well-padded shoulder bags, each including a detachable rain cover.	DL10 Grip Hoster £21.99 DL12 Grip Hoster £25.99 DL14 Grip Hoster £31.99 DL16 Grip Hoster £49.99 DL18 Grip Hoster £59.99 CS15 Camera Satchel £89.99 CS17 Camera Satchel £99.99 PR420 Press Reporter Bag £109.99 PR460 Press Reporter Bag £149.99 DL210 Bumblebee Backpack £94.99 PL74 FlyBy Rolling Bag £219.99
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FLASH GUNS

Nissin

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Nissin Di866 Speedlite

The world's most powerful hotshoe flashgun. A guide number of 60m/ISO100 and a clear, full colour LCD panel, makes this advanced unit simple to use. Designed for use with Canon and Nikon digital SLRs, the Di866 features full support for Canon's ETTL and Nikon's iTTL functionality with the option for full manual overrides. Covering a range of focal lengths from 24-105mm and including a range of accessories, the Nissin Di866 is the flashgun professionals have been waiting for. Includes built-in USB port for download upgrades.

£239.99 £199.99

Nissin Di622 MkII Speedlite

An impressively powerful hotshoe flash, with a guide number of 44m/ISO100. Features full manual control, including bounce and swivel flash head, wide angle diffuser and catch light reflector, wireless slave flash, with built-in flash and slave flash, and built-in light anti-energy saving auto-off circuit.

£149.99 £129.99

Nissin Di466 Speedlite

An advanced and versatile flash gun, with a guide number of 33m/ISO100. Featuring the latest TTL flash control technology, specification includes adjustable bounce flash head, wide angle diffuser and catch light reflector, built-in slave flash on manual mode and energy saving auto-off circuit.

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NEW METZ RANGE

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Metz 44 AF-1 £149.99
Metz 50 AF-1 £189.99
Metz 58 AF-2 £229.99

Dedicated TTL models for Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Panasonic, Pentax and Samsung. Full specifications at www.premier-ink.co.uk

Marumi DF14 Ring Flash

The highly-acclaimed Marumi Ring Flash is a compact flash gun, consisting of a main unit and a separate ring flash. The flash has a 14mm/ISO105mm guide number and includes a built-in flash head, with built-in light anti-energy saving auto-TTL exposure. The lens mount is also supplied for 55mm, 58mm, 60mm, 67mm, 77mm. Available in Canon, Nikon and Sony, with full automatic TTL metering.

£119.99

TTL Flash Cord Coiled

TTL Flash Cord Straight

£24.99

Available in Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Panasonic, Pentax and Samsung fit.

FLASH DIFFUSERS

Bounce Flash Diffuser

These popular, simple opaque plastic diffusers simply fit onto the front of your flash gun, creating a diffused bare bulb effect with even coverage. A huge range available in Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Pentax, Metz & Nissin. Below is just a sample of the range.

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Canon 430EX / 430EXII / 500EX
Canon 580EX / 580EXII
Nikon SB600 / SB800 / SB900
Nikon SB24 / SB25 / SB26 / SB28
Sony: HVL-F42AM / HVL-F58AM, Metz: 48AF1 / 58AF1
Nissin: Di466 / Di622 / Di866, Pentax: AF-540FGZ

£10.99

Inverted Dome Pro Flash Diffuser Set

Comprising a clear vinyl body that simply slips onto the head of the flash gun, and an inverted frosted dome that clips onto the front.

In addition to diffusing the light directly hitting your subject, the inverted dome spreads light evenly throughout the rest of the clear vinyl body, making up to 360° of the environment, thus creating a natural soft diffused effect. Especially useful for shooting interiors and portraits, and is a firm favourite with wedding photographers.

Supplied with four domes, giving you a full range of natural, cool or warm-tones. Available in four sizes:

Size 1: 62-65 x 39-42mm Nikon SB600, SB800, etc

Size 2: 64-68 x 35-38mm Canon 420EX, 430EX, etc

Size 3: 68-72 x 46-49mm Nikon SB26, 27, 28, etc

Size 4: 73-77 x 46-49mm Canon 550EX, 580EX, etc

STUDIO ACCESSORIES

Westcott Apollos and Halos

The convenience of an umbrella meets the control of a softbox. Built on an umbrella frame, they mount to any standard umbrella receptacle.

Mini Apollo

£59.99

£99.99

£104.99

Westcott 28" Apollo

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£149.99

£169.99

Westcott Umbrella Flash Kit

£67.99

£84.99

£104.99

Westcott Umbrellas

Such a simple but effective idea - umbrellas with a telescopic shaft. Perfect for travel, they open to 43" diameter, but collapse down to just 14.5".

43" Umbrella Soft Silver £18.99

43" Umbrella White £18.99

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including reflector, reflector holder, and light stand.

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Lastolite Ezybox Hotshoe

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£156.99

£102.99

£174.99

£119.99

£192.99

Lastolite Flashgun TiltHeads

These ingenious Lastolite TiltHeads provide a way of attaching your flashgun to a light stand, or a tripod.

TiltHead For Single Flashgun £16.99

TiltHead Umbrella Kit £89.99

Colour Balance and Exposure Control

Handy pop-up colour balance and exposure control grey/white cards.

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5D MKII + 24-105 IS	£2339
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7D + 15-85 IS	£1697
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600D body	£549
600D + 18-55 IS	£637
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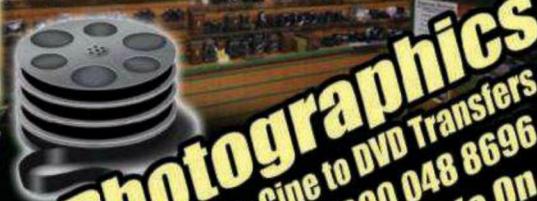
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20th - 24th Isle of Skye/Glencoe

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April 2012

6th - 8th - Shropshire inc Macro and Bluebells

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20th - 22nd - Lake District

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May 2012

11th - 13th - Lake District

2 nights Dinner Bed and Breakfast £425.00 (2 Place)

15th - 19th Isle of Skye/Glencoe

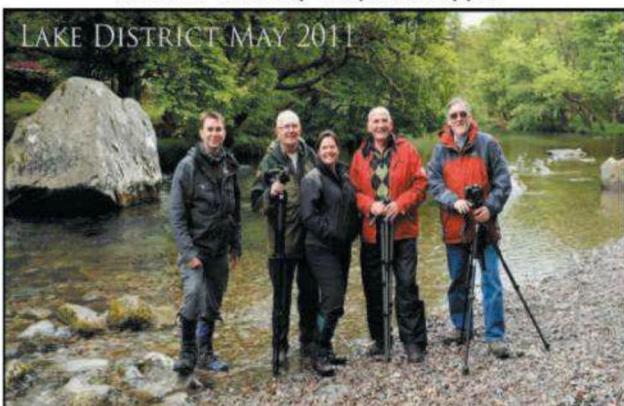
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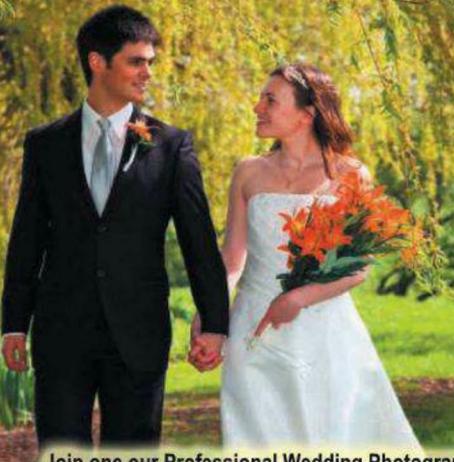
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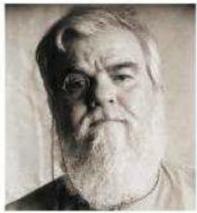
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ROGER HICKS

If a copy of a work of art is indistinguishable from the real thing, does it really matter which one you own?

WHAT is the difference between a copy and the real thing? What, in any case, qualifies as a 'copy'? Consider a vintage Ansel Adams print, made at around the time the picture was taken, signed by the Master. If half a dozen exist (making it a 'limited edition'), that's still six copies: can you think of another, better word than 'copy'?

Now consider the same print, made 30 years later, but still by Ansel Adams. And the same print, made from the original negative by one of his acolytes. And a photomechanical reproduction, be it never so good. The market has absolutely no difficulty in deciding the relative financial values of these four kinds of 'copy'. If you prefer another photographer to Ansel Adams, substitute their name instead, such as Ralph Gibson or Sebastião Salgado.

For that matter, it doesn't have to be a photographer. Throughout history, there have been painters good enough to make copies of others' works that are indistinguishable from the real thing. Several have been caught out only by chemical analyses of paints that were not available to the original artists.

Confirming that something is 'real' is often called 'provenance', but why does it matter that this was actually painted by Picasso or Rembrandt, so long as it is indistinguishable? For that matter, Picasso is reputed to have said, 'I often fake Picassos.'

The answer seems to be that we demand some sort of link with the artist's 'vril', a 19th century word meaning 'life force', most often encountered today in the word Bovril, ox-life-force. The word was invented by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, also credited with the immortal opening lines, 'It was a dark and stormy night...'

Be that as it may, the artist's vril must in some way be mysteriously infused into the art. Otherwise, why should we care? A cynic might reply that it's a simple matter of money: the real thing is rarer, and therefore more valuable. But this doesn't have much to do with art.

As a rule, the more effort the artist has put into his work (which mostly means the more of his time), the more of his vril it is generally perceived as containing; and, to many, the more it is 'worth'. This explains why

Andy Warhol is so despised by vril-collectors, but quite well regarded by art collectors. He is also widely admired by the mindless rich, who see art only as an investment, but this is another story.

As much as I hesitate to place myself in the company of Adams, Gibson, Salgado, Rembrandt, Bulwer-Lytton and Warhol, the question of vril and 'the real thing' recently raised its head in my own photography. I have long been an admirer of paper-negative prints from the dawn of photography. I don't want to fake them. I just want to recreate that air of mystery and timelessness, the broad masses of light and shadow and almost total lack of detail.

It is, of course, perfectly feasible to recreate

them using the original technology, even (had I the inclination) to the point of grinding my own lens and building my own sliding-box camera, never mind the relatively simple matter of coating paper with silver salts and developing the images in gallic acid. I can't help suspecting that if I went to all that trouble, I could

probably establish a name for myself on the fine-art circuit. It does seem, after all, that a fair swathe of photographic fine art is based at least as much upon obscurity and difficulty as upon artistic merit.

The only trouble is, I'm lazy. I'm also cynical. Although I actually do know quite a bit about art, I also know what I like. Ignoring the past few decades, because it always takes a bit of a run-up before I appreciate anything new, my tastes are pretty catholic, from Breugel to Lichtenstein via Alma-Tadema. Not only do I know what I like, I also know that I rarely give a stuff about how it was created. That's the artist's problem, not mine – except when I'm the artist.

Which is why, when I recently tried the zone plate in my Monochrom Subjectiv mount on a digital camera, I thought, 'Hmmm. I could convert these to black & white, tone them, print them on a heavy rag paper with an inkjet printer and end up with something remarkably close to a paper-negative print.'

Which I accordingly did, with results I rather like. Would there be more vril in the pictures if I had made paper negatives? Or is it (as we constantly pretend) only the picture that counts? **AP**

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com

Editorial

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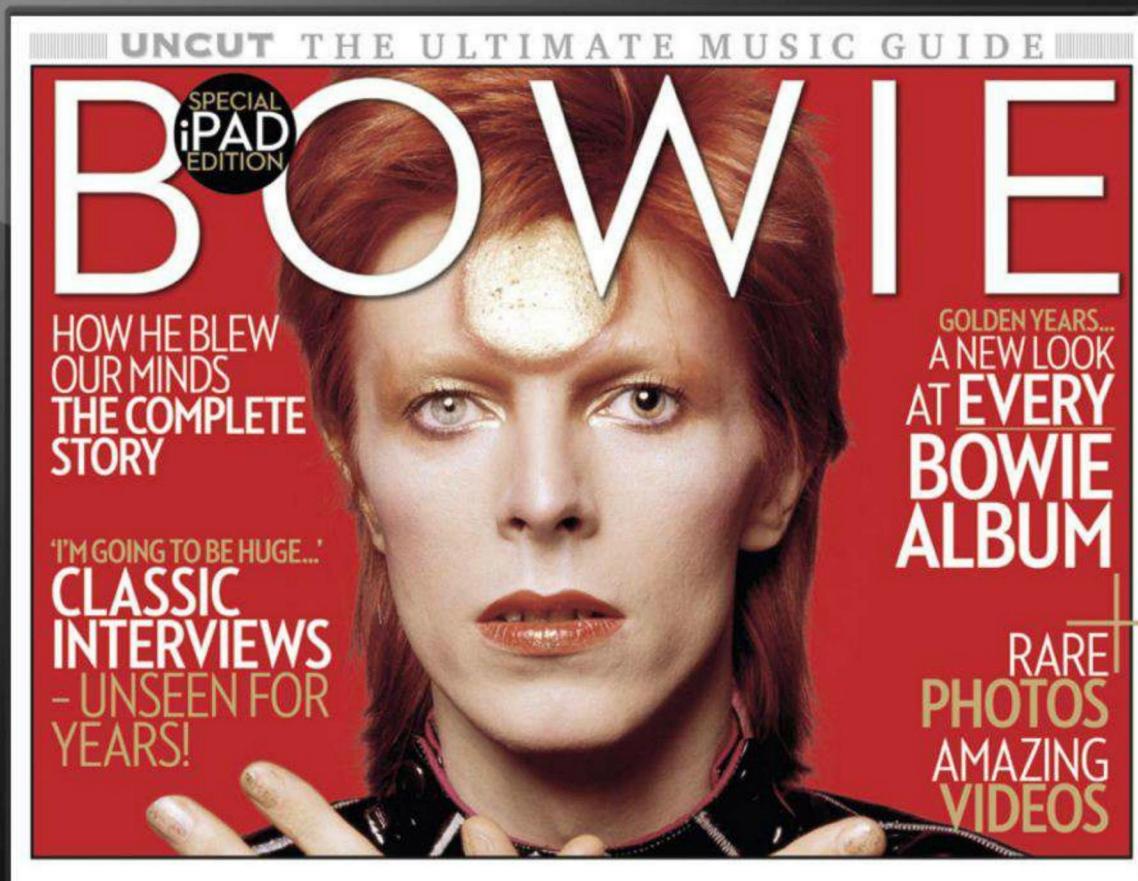
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OH MY GOODNESS!

Was all we said when we first saw this new camera which will become the latest Olympus masterpiece in a long line of design classics. We fully expect you to say the same.

Sadly we can't share details with you just yet, so if you would like to be one of the first to find out more, zap the QR code with your smartphone. It generates a text message for you to send and pre-register for updates when we can reveal more*. Alternatively text 'Olympus' to 88802 or register at <http://bit.ly/olympusOMG> for email alerts.

Everyone who pre-registers will be eligible for an invitation to exclusive events to view the new camera before it is available to buy.

We will also be at the Focus on Imaging Show at the Birmingham NEC in early March

As for now, we just can't stop saying it,
OH MY GOODNESS!

OLYMPUS